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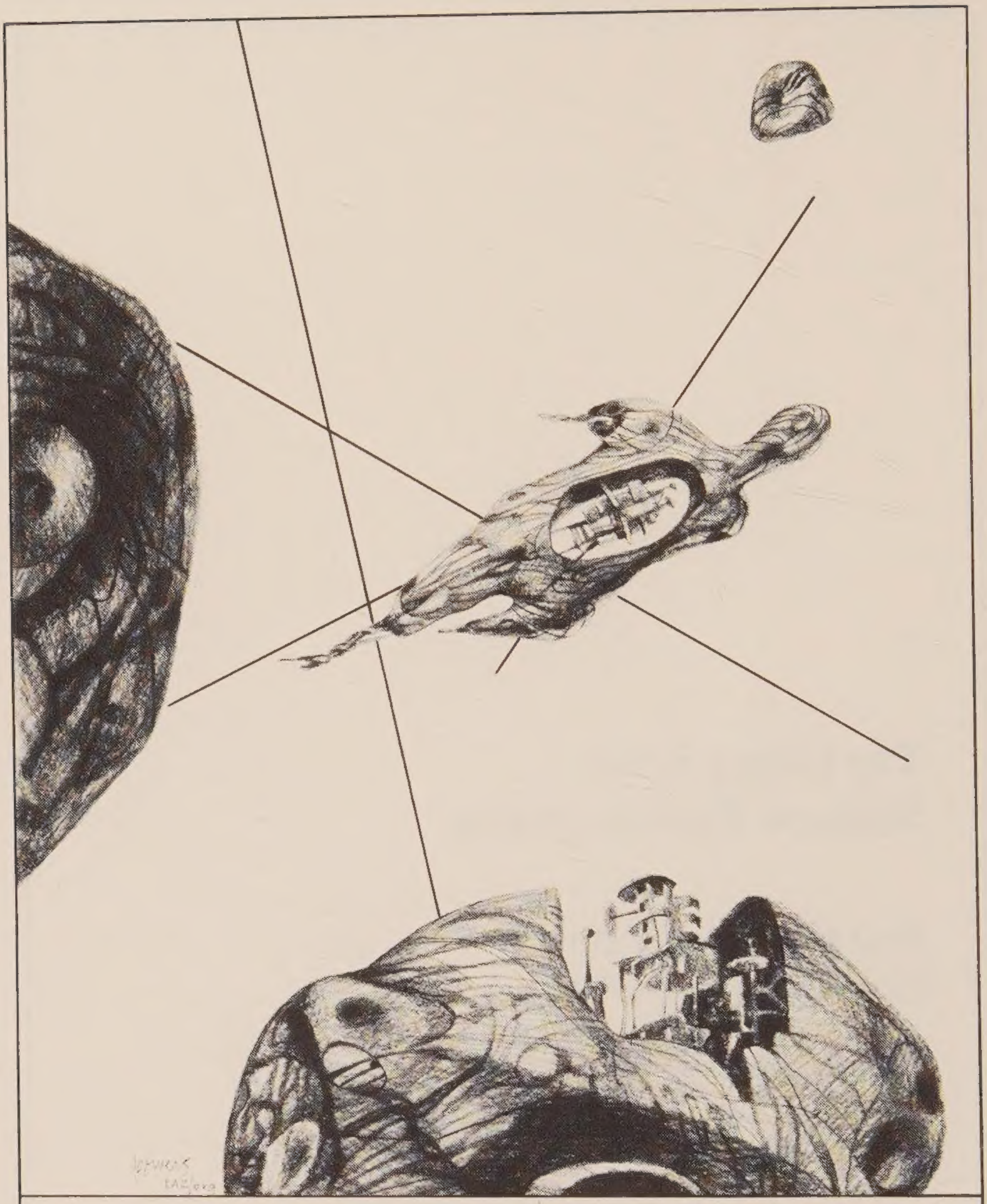
The Gregg Press
Science Fiction Series

Star (Psi Cassiopeia)
by C. I. Defontenay



The Gregg Press Science Fiction Series

David G. Hartwell, L. W. Currey, *Editors*
Richard Gid Powers, *Associate Editor*

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Star (Psi Cassiopeia)

C. I. DEFONTENAY

Translated from the French by
P. J. SOKOLOWSKI
With New Introductions by
PIERRE VERSINS *and* MARC ANGENOT

GREGG PRESS

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Introduction

IT HAS commonly been taken for granted that, as an independent genre, science fiction was born at the end of the nineteenth century with Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. These two writers even stood for a number of people as two John-the-Baptists, announcing in the wide desert of conventional fiction the glorious period of pulp magazines and of blooming Gernsbackian "scientifiction."

Nevertheless, it is equally common, at least for the literati of *fandom* to dig out the archaeology of the genre as far back in time as possible, in search of the "ancestors."

For some, and quite rightly, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and *The Last Man* (1826) already prefigure modern science fiction. Others, moved by a passionate zeal, declare that science fiction is already going strong in the seventeenth century with Cyrano de Bergerac and even in the Hellenistic period with Lucian. People like Pierre Versins go even further back, to the dawn of civilization, and see in the Epic of Gilgamesh, written in 3500 B.C., the first authentic monument of the genre — or at least of "rational conjecture."

It is easy to see that these somewhat preposterous disputes are a question of pure convention and criteria: actually, the notion of "rational conjecture" is quite elastic and flexible; it is easy to discover in utopias and travelogues any number of scientific extrapolations and technological anticipations. Such types as the gothic novel and tales of fantasy in general certainly draw from various ambivalent forms of rationalized wonder and contain both mythical and cognitive elements at once.

Instead of endeavoring to extract those conjectural themes that presumably prefigure modern sf in a given work, one should perhaps attempt to illuminate the specific function that these elements play in the general economy of various narrative forms.

We are then confronted with two types of biases: one which sees sf as evolving with the most archaic forms of culture. Another, which considers the Verne-Wells model as emerging *ex nihilo* and as constituting thereby original types with which to evaluate subsequent works.

Such an attitude would indeed be justified if, at the dawn of the industrial age, there were merely a few stuttering or archaic works, so poorly inspired and insignificant that they barely deserve the term "science fiction." But this is far from true, as we shall see.

French science fiction is a good case in point. To ignore whatever was written in the field — however little it may be — prior to Jules Verne, would lead us to blur the historical perspective, to blot out some important premises as well as to disregard works of great originality, aesthetic value and subversive ideological force. These long-forgotten writings should not be approached from a purely philological or archaeological perspective. Even if they contain a somewhat old fashioned charm, they are not simply records of an antiquated *Zeitgeist:* some of them at least come down to us with a critical power untamed by the course of time.

Star by C. I. Defontenay is one of the most remarkable examples of early nineteenth-century science fiction. Indeed, one can resolutely call it "science fiction," for, no matter what definition one gives the genre, whether it is thematic (technological themes, xenobiological and astronautical extrapolations), epistemological (cognitive estrangement between alien and empirical world) or semiotic (by referring to narrative models and to semantic paradigms), the work fits unquestionably in the category. Moreover, *Star* is a work of art which was written at a focal moment in the ideological history of modern societies: the meeting point, in 1850, of declining forms of speculation (Cyrano, Fontenelle) and an outstanding type of ideological deviance begotten by the evolution of industrial capitalism and the eudaemonic socialism of Fourier, in conjunction with the first ideological fruits of new sciences like palaeanthropology, ethnography, history of civilization, astronautics

and modern astronomy. Defontenay endeavored to integrate all these ideological strands in his narrative with an intellectual audacity which keeps pace with his imaginative and aesthetic force.

Nevertheless, at the risk of disparaging Defontenay's original talent, it should be said that *Star* was not an unaccountable meteor going across the literary sky.

In order to understand the book and the intellectual atmosphere in which it appeared, other contemporary writings — also fallen into oblivion but equally free and imaginative in their critical boldness — should be briefly examined.

Without encumbering ourselves with a hodge-podge of obscure works whose only merit is eccentricity, we should mention some names in support of the thesis that after 1800, as a reaction to the development of industrial capitalism and reflecting the political upheavals against the rising power of the bourgeoisie, political and cultural works of fiction were produced which altered old narrative schemes — such as the utopian, the models of the extraordinary voyage, of the robinsonade, and of the "romance of terror and wonder" — to give full vent to a promethean reverie of cognitive and libidinal emancipation. In contrast to the idealistic classical utopias of such writers as Cabet and Owen, which emphasized a voluntary acceptance of social domestication, this first "science fiction" is fundamentally libertarian, centrifugal, and materialistic: what can be known is seen as a *continuum in expansion,* on which man can have grasp, in spite of obstacles and disappointments. There existed what we may call an optimism of knowledge that unified science and desire.

This is just the opposite of the atmosphere of oppressive transcendence, compartmentalization, vague threat, and fear of the unknown that, at the same time, infuses the gothic novel and its variants.

A new way of thinking was coming to being that rejected the prevailing pseudo-rationalistic compartmentalization and that attempted to reconcile the artificial dualities of reason and imagination, knowledge and desire, body and mind, the need for social harmony and the need for individual autonomy. What Charles Fourier sought in the field of theory is what Defontenay dreamt in his liberating fiction.

Among Defontenay's precursors, Cousin de Granville's *Last*

Man (1805) — which inspired Mary Shelley — depicts the end of mankind. *Last Man* is not an allegory and does not require a mystical or occult reading to understand its natural causes or to appreciate its pointed moral. A new ice age has begun, the moon has disappeared, land is barren and the "nuptial bond" is sterile. In spite of the gigantic progress of science, the hero, fruit of the last prolific marriages, will die before being able to couple with the last women. This ontological pessimism should not conceal the optimism implicit in the narrative: nature is neither fierce nor favorable to man; it is indifferent to him but comprehensible. Man's faith is to make use of it until he is doomed to disappear.

Restif de la Bretonne's *Les Posthumes (The Posthumous Letters,* 1802), a late work of this plebeian genius, is an odd letter saga, which, from the 207th letter on, describes the voyage of the Duke of Multipliandre through the planets and even the galaxy. The hero uses a technique of personality transfer to penetrate the minds of the extraterrestrial beings he meets. This could be a pure tale of fantasy were it not for Restif's interest in rational causes and his pleasure in building systems and laws. Restif also describes detailed grammars of the Martian and Venusian languages, and his cosmology, centered on the theme of copulations of stars, obviously inspired Fourier.

Felix Bodin's *Roman de L'Avenir (A Novel of the Future,* 1834) is, expressly, the first *novel* of anticipation — that is to say, a novel that presents the opposite of a utopia. In the novel of anticipation, there is no question of describing an ideal society, of setting up harmony in a closed system; instead, it is an attempt to describe a moment of future history, with its contradictions and its dynamism — a moment which is at the same time unforeseeable but coherent, reasonable though not hyperrationalized, stable but not absolutely harmonious. It is the concept of the future divorced from the ideas of perfection and necessity. These qualities make Bodin's work differ from that of his closest predecessor, Sebastien Mercier's *The Year 2440* (1772). Mercier still wrote of an idealistic utopia of the Enlightenment, even if it took the form of anticipation.

With Bodin's novel of anticipation, science fiction freed itself from the utopian tradition, not only because of its content, but also because it established a proper narrative form.

What seems eccentric and nonsensical in Bodin's tale to the

contemporary reader will have to appear perfectly normal and conceivable for the man of the twentieth century (where Bodin's novel is set), because this modern reader will possess, from experience, the keys that make the events of the narrative likely and familiar: he will know the social standards, the rules, the conventions underlying these events.

The classical utopia attempts to exhaust the list of every minute detail to testify to the excellence of its ideal society. Science fiction, on the contrary, by avoiding too many explanatory connections, by inducing the reader to speculate on the nature of the system underlying the unfamiliar, random events that are presented, produces a realistic narrative, but one that is founded on *absent paradigms*. It remains for the reader to find out the elements and the structure. This constitutes an essential semiotic phenomenon which characterizes sf as such, a phenomenon which has not been adequately stressed, as far as I know.

If Restif's *Les Posthumes* can be seen as the first space opera, Bodin's *Roman de L'Avenir* as the first novel of anticipation, and Granville's *Le Dernier Homme* as the first catastrophic novel, Geoffroy's *Napoléon Apocryphe* (1836) can be said to be the first alternate universe novel, belonging to a subgenre insufficiently analysed, although widely represented in contemporary science fiction, for instance by Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* (1962). In *Napoléon Apocryphe* there has not been any retreat from Russia, nor any Waterloo: Napoleon carried on conquering the world till 1832 and established on the whole world a totalitarian dictatorship. Geoffroy's book could be a mere satirical allegory, but, once again, the elements of rational conjecture greatly outweigh the polemical innuendos.

Finally, E. Souvestre's *Le Monde tel qu'il sera (The World as it will be,* 1846) should be considered as the first counter-utopia: this novel of Taylorist and industrial anticipation ("Tout à la vapeur" — everything with steam) has been frequently compared to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Eugene Zamiatin's *We.*

The few titles we just mentioned, from 1802 to 1846, bring us back to Defontenay, whose novel was published in 1854. They allow us to see that *Star* did not appear in a total vacuum and that it reflects a general atmosphere of rational imagination. But these novels are not sufficient to explain the work itself, since

they cannot be considered as its sources, strictly speaking. Several aspects of this work and of its author still remain rather obscure.

However, the reading of the other books signed by Defontenay makes it possible to speculate on the facts of his career, his thoughts and influences. Some pages in Charles Monselet, a prominent critic of the time, and in Théophile Gautier show that Defontenay's contemporaries were not totally indifferent to the originality of *Star,* even if they did not grasp much of it. Nevertheless, after Defontenay's death in 1856, his name was not mentioned for nearly a century.

Raymond Queneau who, prior to World War II, had begun research on the heterogeneous minor writers ("les hétéroclites"), was the first, in 1949, to draw attention to Defontenay's masterpiece. (*Star* itself was not reprinted in French until 1972.) More recently, Mr. Jean-José Marchand has patiently gathered every biographical datum it was possible to discover about Defontenay, publishing his results in two articles (see Bibliography).

C. I. Defontenay was born on February 26, 1819 in Cahaignes (département de l'Eure), a son of a well-to-do countryman who was, so it seems, liberal and antireligious. The odd name he gave to his child — Charlemagne Ischir — shows an admiration for great men combined with some eccentricity. Defontenay got his Bachelor of Arts in 1839, Bachelor of Science in 1841, and became Doctor in Medicine in 1845. That year he defended a dissertation "on tubercular consumption conceived from the point of view of hygiene and therapeutics." A short time after, he married the daughter of a provincial lawyer. In 1854 his wife bore him twins, of whom one lived until 1937. But then his wife died on September 20, 1854, one month after *Star* was published. Defontenay himself died at the age of 37 from cancer of the stomach on September 4, 1856. He reportedly practiced medicine in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, although we know very little about his medical career.

Besides his medical dissertation, Defontenay published an *Essai de Calliplastie* in 1846, a work reprinted under different titles in 1849 and 1855. In it, he set out to lay the foundations of a new science aimed at collecting all the surgical and medical ways to eliminate physical ugliness: "Ugliness makes people wicked," he observed. This work makes Defontenay a true

forerunner of cosmetic surgery. It was also his only successful book, interesting to us because it is nothing less than *applied science fiction.* At one point (p. 16), he states: "When man will have broken the shackles that a blind fate weighs down on his felicity . . . only then, society will be able to make a gigantic step towards a more perfect equality." Such a proposition expresses an axiom peculiar to all sf: science is an essential factor in social modification, and social transformations in turn transform the possibilities of science. Defontenay quotes Lavater, Condillac, Cabanis ("Only medicine has the power to transform the human being"). He believes that love beautifies the body and prescribes it to young women.

Defontenay also published in 1855 his only other literary work: *Etudes dramatiques,* a collection of four theatrical sketches, conceived in a romantic and promethean spirit, as an attempt to renew dramatic art by spurning literary convention.

Star was published in August 1854 at a little-known publishing house, Ledoyen in Paris. The subtitle of the work is "Fantasia," a word apparently coined by Defontenay, to designate the new genre that he intentionally invents.

The general theme of *Star,* the story of an anthropomorphic race and its migrations through a triple solar system with its only planet, (Star) and its five satellites, seems to be for its time absolutely original, without immediate sources and, moreover, without imitators. In *Star* Defontenay practises, in the realm of fiction, what Charles Fourier had wonderfully called "l'écart absolu" — radical estrangement. Although neither Fourier nor Saint-Simon is ever quoted, the influence of those "utopian" socialists on the Starian social system is unquestionable. From them, Defontenay learned that imagination contains a liberating political power, and that contrary to the bourgeois commonplace, politics must become the science of the *im*possible.

The Starian saga is significant in relation to the empirical world, not because it gives a beautified or darkened reflection of that world, but because there is between *Star* and the empirical reality a *maximal gap.* The world of *Star* is, however, intelligible in itself. Its nature, its fauna, the material conditions of life, the accidents of natural history, although totally removed from the experience of a nineteenth-century European, contain their own logic: they determine institutional choices, which in their turn generate social values, social myths and collective ideals.

Through this narrative of "pure fantasy," Defontenay acts as a theoretician of historical materialism.

Strange and singular phenomena occur and the reader, to his surprise, discovers a universe which is at the same time baffling *and* understandable. Every aberrant oddity is linked with other estranging ones, and they accumulate to build a world moved by a *sui generis* dynamic where *man* may recognize himself. This is, in my opinion, the overall project that animates the history of *Star*. But of course today's reader, looking backward, should be able to recognize several philosophical concepts that reveal the time when the story was written. Agnosticism, criticism of institutional religions, confidence in the law of progress, faith in human perfectibility, belief in a biologico-social continuum, political elitism, free enquiry and liberalism: these elements are part of Defontenay's ideological background. But such elements never become *theses* that would block the development of the story.

Among the major thematic aspects of *Star* is a feature that characterizes Starian civilization — the human-animal *symbiosis* (this theme is also found in Félix Bodin). The birds *Citos* are household gods that share the intimate life of Starians. The *Talersis*, a kind of gigantic whale, is tamed to tow the boats. Such symbiosis, the secret of which is lost for the inhabitants of the Earth, appears as a harmonious substitute for mechanical inventions and industrialization. Man, while keeping a friendly contact with the animal world, is not enslaved by the machine.

This symbiotic reverie is extended to the relations between Starians and the inhabitants of the satellites: the colonization is never shown in terms of conflict and destruction, but always in terms of complementarity, mutual help and harmony. Every extraplanetarian race, adapted to its specific milieu, benefits from the cooperation.

The narrative scheme is an "Einsteinian" one, the scheme of a universe in expansion, with spatial migrations, multiplication of cultural contacts, development of arts and sciences, broadening of the minds, and symbiosis of races.

Such a model stands in contrast to the one of the socialist utopia, such as Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* (1838) and other nineteenth-century utopianists. Cabet's ideal is one of implosion. It is the paranoid scheme of the *Urstaat*, of anonymous despotism, harmony only in conformity, triumph of com-

putable happiness and generalized exchange: only one newspaper for all, one menu, same schedules, same clothes for everybody, dissent impossible and omnipresent proselytism. The planified despotism dreamed by Cabet and Defontenay's liberating reverie should not be indiscriminately united under the label of "social romanticism."

Other aspects could also be pointed out. The antigravity theme, for instance: the "abares," spaceships that allow the survivors of the "Slow Plague" to migrate towards the satellites are provided with an apparatus which suspends the effects of gravitation. It is the first time in French that this extrapolative gadget appears (in English it had already been used in George Tucker's *Voyage to the Moon,* 1827).

It is impossible to review in a few pages all the conjectural elements that abound here: the imaginary flora and fauna of *Star,* the cosmological system of Ruliel with its double star, the ingenious mythology of the first barbaric societies, the astronautical techniques, the anthropoid races that coexist with *Homo Starensis,* "longevites," "repleux" and "cetracites," the traits of mass psychology in the Slow-Plague episode, the social ideology of the neo-starians (based upon a deification of Man), the elitist political system promoted by Marulcar, the architectural style of Tasbar established on the principles of helix and spiral, and the samples of Starian literature inserted in the narrative. Defontenay's imagination seized hold of every aspect of his world. "Let us create a new Earth," he writes in the Epilogue, "let us invent Suns. Those happier Stars will lend their Light, so we can discover the new."

Although more than one century separates us from *Star,* Defontenay's masterpiece remains a source of ever-renewed wonder. Far more legitimately than any earlier work, it deserves to be called a "classic" of science fiction.

Marc Angenot
McGill University

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AN EPIC COMPARABLE ONLY TO THE WORK OF STAPLEDON AND TOLKIEN

"Defontenay invented the novel of the future, of science fiction and of interplanetary voyages far in advance of Jules Verne."

—Jean Marchand

"In reading Defontenay, one occasionally feels that he had been preceded by a whole school of science fiction—by SF anthologies, magazines, and—why not?—fan publications; in short by numerous writers whose works could have influenced him, for the reader will come across many inventions that were rediscovered afterward, often long afterward. . . . And when one thinks that Defontenay pushed audacity in his epic—because it is an epic—to the point of giving examples of Star poetry and theater . . . !"

—Pierre Versins

G. Barr

STAR

(Psi Cassiopeia)

by

C. I. Defontenay

Translated by P. J. SOKOLOWSKI

Introduction by Pierre Versins

Illustrations by George Barr

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INTRODUCTION

I've always been irritated—but only slightly, let's not exaggerate—by the chauvinistic attitude of Americans (the Monroe Doctrine forever!) toward foreign science fiction. Since I am French, I am particularly galled by their willful ignorance of what is happening and what has happened in French science fiction. Though there seems to be some improvement lately, the situation is such that it could make me chauvinistic in turn, and I wouldn't at all like that.

However, where *Star, or Psi Cassiopeia* is concerned, I can hardly reproach Americans with their ignorance, since until it was reissued in 1972 as part of the excellent "Présence du Futur" series, this Defontenay novel was completely unknown to the French themselves. Just think —in 1966, when I did a long analysis of it, only five copies could be found. Two were imprisoned in large libraries, and I own one of the remaining three (thanks for your concern).

As a matter of fact, it was at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris that Raymond Queneau—who was studying literary oddballs and madmen for a monumental work that he never completed but from which he drew the title of his novel *Les Enfants du Limon*—discovered *Star* in 1930. He mentioned it in a special 1949 *Cahiers du Sud* issue devoted to "Minor French Romantics," praising both the author's thematic ingenuity and his style, which certainly has worn better than some passages in Victor Hugo. (It should probably be noted that the beginning of Defontenay's tale is in blank hexameters, a stylistic practice as uncommon then as it is now.)

On the other hand, the work was assassinated in a short review by Camille Flammarion, the well-known popular astronomer, at the end of that thematology of fic-

titious astronautics, his essay *Les Mondes imaginaries et les mondes réels* (reissued in 1877): "The supposition [a multiple stellar system with inhabited planets] is not lacking in cleverness," he wrote, "but it is far from showing an astronomer at work."

An astronomer, no. But a scientist nevertheless.

Born at Cahaignes (Eure) on February 16, 1819, Charles Ischir Defontenay came from a family of anticlerical farmers. In 1845 he became a doctor of medicine, his thesis, *De la Phtisie tuberculeuse,* being published by Rignoux. The following year, under the name Dr. Cid—a pseudonym composed of his initials—he released a study which is still part of the literature, *Essai de Calliplastie,* published by Moquet. It was reissued in 1849 under the more comprehensible title *Le Trésor de beauté.* In 1854, the same year in which *Star* was published, there appeared a work entitled *Etudes dramatiques.* It included four plays—*Barkokébas, Le Vieux de la montagne, Orphée* and *Prométhée*—and like the novel it was published by Ledoyen. Defontenay died on September 4, 1856, in his thirty-seventh year.

In addition to the already mentioned comments by Queneau and Flammarion, Jean-José Marchand, who unearthed just about all we know of our author—and revealed it in two remarkable articles which appeared in *La Quinzaine littéraire,* Numbers 100 and 138, August 1970 and April 1972, respectively, before prefacing the 1972 reissue of the book—notes that Defontenay's masterwork was the subject of an article (August 22, 1854) by Théophile Gautier, and of a brief mention by Charles Monselet in the 1857 edition of *La Lorgnette littéraire.* Without knowing Marchand's work, I myself gave a detailed analysis and description of the novel in *Ailleurs* (Numbers 5-6, 1966) before devoting an article to it in my *Encyclopédie de l'Utopie, des Voyages extraordinaires et de la Science Fiction* (1972). And that's about all the comment that has been stirred up by a work that I personally feel is one of the jewels of 19th-century science fiction.

Just what is *Star?* Nothing less than the second science fiction "Space Opera"—the first, of course, having been *The True History,* written by Lucian of Samosata in the second century. Lucian's Book One draws us joyously and irresistibly into the midst of a gigantic space battle to

which extraterrestrial creatures, each more extraordinary than the next, come running from the very ends of the Galaxy to help the Lunarians in their just struggle—is a struggle ever anything but just?—against the Solarians. Never will I forget those "20,000 Lacanoptères," which are "large birds covered with herbs instead of feathers, and on which were mounted the Scorodomaques and the Cenchroboles." Nor am I likely to forget the "Psyllotoxotes of the Bear Star" and the "50,000 Anémodromes," nor the Aéroconopes, the Struthobalanes, or the Néphélocentaurs of the Milky Way. I have dreamt of them. I still dream of them.

I am also not likely to stop dreaming of the marvelous "psargino," the animal about whom we are at almost the beginning of *Star* given a note worthy of a naturalist. There have been similar treatments since, of course, notably in the work of Stapledon, but let's not forget that date—1854. The author was a doctor, which no doubt explains why the psargino is so plausible that one expects to run into it on turning the page of a zoology treatise.

And what about those "abares," those spacecraft of ultramodern conception? They might even have inspired Wells's Cavorite in *The First Men in the Moon*—that is, in the unlikely event that he had known of *Star*. What could be both more precise and better described than those ovoid vessels—note the form, remarkable for the period—equipped with an anti-gravity system on which no author was able to improve until modern times?

In reading Defontenay, one occasionally feels that he had been preceded by a whole school of science fiction—by SF anthologies, magazines, and—why not?—fan publications; in short, by numerous writers whose works could have influenced him, for the reader will come across many inventions that were rediscovered afterward, often long afterward; for example, the planet, Lessur, that makes love to its entire population. This is a theme that Druillet partially reintroduced in 1966 in *Le Mystère des abîmes*, the first comic strip to relate the adventures of Lone Sloane.

And when one thinks that Defontenay pushed audacity in his epic—because it is an epic—to the point of giving examples of Star poetry and theater . . . !

In short, isn't it true that here, a little past the middle of the 19th century, we already have a completely fin-

ished model of the science fiction novel? How right the author was to emphasize at the end of his work what there was about it that was "strange, new, and uncreated until then."

Rovray, February 28, 1975 —*Pierre Versins*
(translated by Stanley Hochman)

DESCENT

I.

Dare!
Be aware
That the highest stair
Of the Himalayas here
Are before us . . . and India is there
Under our feet. Climb that stair.
Hold! Brahma, in air,
Rises fair
There!

II.

And the Indian pointed out, in a group of peaks,
Rising out of the mountains, the brow of sublime blocks.
Before them each Mogul bows in reverence,
Believing he worships the steps of the Hindu Zeus;
For the traditions of Tibet and Arachosia
Teach that Brahma, following across India
The granite stairway of the long Himalayas,
From those rocks, would leap to the zenith at times.

III.

Without delaying we took the way
That the hand of my Indian guide indicated.
Without any doubt, the course of a day
Would bring us to the mountain he noted
As the major goal of our long ascent.

Then, for some anxious moments, we crossed
Several ravines on a dangerous route;
In time, as the day declined, we reached
A fresh plateau dappled with verdure
Where we had to spend the hours of darkness.
When I had had a meager supper,
I fell into the unconsciousness
Which often follows extreme lassitude,
In spite of the noise which sometimes raised fears;
For the howling wind in that solitude
Echoed through all the Himalayas.

IV.

When I awoke, the sun already illuminated
Asia far and wide. A pure and limpid light
Lengthened my view up to the magnificent horizon.
For from that smiling knoll amidst peaks set back to back
India was spread out, and before my eyes were retraced,
From the summit of the giant mountain to the borders of space,
The diverse stages of the rich regions from which I came
Exploring. First there were, in the distant infinity,
Rain forests where clumps of tropical palms shot up;
And then meandering fields, where the clustered villages
Seemed to us at that hour to make the pinnacles
Of the Indian temples shimmer so capriciously.
To the west, on the other hand, at the mountain's foot, sheer walls
Were seen with a vast abyss that was hollowed from the rock,
The half-opened casket where the pearl of Asia shone:
My eyes discovered Kashmir in the bosom of its valley.
Terror truly came to assail me when I measured,
In that moment, the immense depths, the great void
Accumulated beneath my feet in a two-month journey
Which saw the scaling of meridional slopes and, at last,
Of these plateaus arranged like a wide, monstrous stairway
In the long Himalayas. Then, for a moment, I considered
What, in these great mountains shaped as pyramids,
Gave rise to the series of steps in Brahma's stairs to the sky,

Which here appeared to be cut to the measure of his
strides.

V.

But soon the voice of my guide,
Who complained of the inactivity
I displayed, made me decide
To end the slow and tedious journey
Of which we had fixed the time.
We had started full of hope and warmth;
Each would with a firm step climb
The rough, uneven slopes of that earth.
A sharp cold chilled the winds,
And nevertheless the sun's radiant glare
On our perpendicular heads
Looked down from the sky of brilliant azure.
By impracticable roads,
Crawling and creeping, we then met
Formidable ice fields,
A triple rampart, forbidding assault
Of the peak where Brahma's abode
Is concealed from mortals, of that dreaded spire,
The highest point in this world
Till then touched only by divine power.

VI.

When I saw myself so high, lost in that desert,
At the heavenly confines of the earth and chaos,
I had wanted to retreat. The savage sanctity
Of those lofty summits froze all my bravery.
Then it seemed that our journey
Was an insult, an injury
To the powers of the sky which we had come to tempt
So close to their habitation . . . And I, bowing
To such majesty, I gave precedence
To him when I saw the audacity in his face.
Avidly, his eyes
Embraced the considerable space
Still separating him from the greatest heights

Of the known world; for never had a climber
Seen himself so near
To the lugubrious spire
Which Hindustan, from far, regards with awe.
With such a success, his mind,
Rejoicing, was inflamed
And exalted with a desire of immense conceit;
He let pride persuade
Him to try the escalade
Of mountains whose heights soared into the unknown
"Poor trembling idiot!
"Stay if it seems right,"
He said with disdain. "I'm going to the highest
"Of this planet's summits
"To penetrate the secrets
"With which the gods surround themselves. To grow greater—
"Isn't that the desire
"Of man in all his career?
"The sky is there so close! . . . Yes, I want to come
"To the supreme abodes,
"To take away the enigmas
"Concealed in their midst. Who knows whether, like God,
"I would know in totality—
"Or become a deity![1]
"What a temptation! when the sky is so close
"That there you might touch heaven!"
And scarcely had he spoken
These words, then he rushed up as if inspired.
With sacrilegious force
In those formations of ice
He cut a path. I followed with my eyes
His sublime madness;
Watching his progress
From below, I seemed to see him fighting, suspended
On the flanks of angry Olympus,
Like Prometheus.

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[1]The Indians believe that one can rise, through works or penance, to the point of becoming one of the heavenly powers, to the point of dethroning a god. (*Author's note.*)

VII.

A smooth and almost vertical plane
He defies;
As he slashes the wall, his step on the mountain
Slides.
He clambers up . . . and I see his hand
Near
Enough in a moment to grasp the sacred
Spire!
Before he could take a step, in the air
Occurs
The most ominous uproar; red lightning's glare
Spurs,
On a flaming trail, a fiery cloud—
Fires
That the rapid, avenging breath of a god
Hurls.
What stone torn from the eternal dome
Are you sending?
Your side is opening! . . . a fragment of heaven,
Descending,
Breaks off Brahma's peak. The shattered summit
Falls,
And the Indian, horror! thrown from the height,
Rolls!

VIII.

The bolide explodes in fragments with the granite,
And the furious blocks, bouncing over my head,
Smashed the high glaciers with their debris.
Old nests of sandy eagles rolled in the torrents . . .
The avalanche poured down its rocks and snow;
It struck and overturned everything as it roared.
Oh, I didn't see it pass in my direction,
For my eyes closed; but I felt a freezing breath,
A jet of convulsive air hiss in my ears . . .

Then, the uproar descending, it died away in the depths.

IX.

The next day,
Following again, but all alone, the way
Which from the summits of those mountains
Had to lead me back into the hot plains
Of India, deluged in abundant sun,
On a rocky knoll, I came upon,
Lodged in the midst of a mass of gray and white,
By the avalanche thrown to that point,
A strange block of metal a dull and dark color.
Its ridges, blunted to an uneven contour,
Still bore on its rough, bloody border
The crushed remains of living, quivering matter.
My wounded heart sadly recognized
In that stone a heavy shard
Of the flashing aerolite
That had struck the Indian attaining the limit
Which a god, the guardian of the heavenly land,
Had drawn with a thunderbolt between him and that world.

DISCOVERY

I.

Despite my cold disgust for that hideous spectacle, curiosity still impelled me to examine the celestial mass which had weighed, perhaps, in the hand of Brahma or at least had long wandered in the sky, in the superior tides of the sea of stars.

II.

I cleared away the snow in which lay that stone from the sky, and I then could see the micaceous slab with some rough little bit of its fracture decorated with the most vivid flecks of gold. And still clearing away the snow, I saw something strange! The profile, thus broken, of that aerolite described the opening of an excavation in its substance—a regular cavity whose missing part was doubtless among the fragments lost or pulverized in the descent.

III.

The bolide was hollow! . . .

What was this rock escaped from the volcanoes of an unknown sphere? From whence did it come in this way? From the desert mountains of the moon? or, driven far by the scintillation of a star rolling in the stream of worlds, did it, fatigued, choose this narrow globe in which to take refuge?

Why these hollowed flanks, this excavation with cubic inner sides shining in somber magnificence?

My mind was overwhelmed by uncertainties. . . .

IV.

I cleared away the snow in searching around it.

I hoped that the scattered remnants, the debris of the bolide, would finally come to tell me what fragment of rock or structure this stone fit. . . .

I no longer saw a trace of the mass fallen from the sky; its splinters, in falling, were doubtless lost in the depths of the gorges.

V.

But, in following the slope of the rocks, my foot came to strike against a resonant object. In the gravel lay a finely worked metal chest. Its cover, slanted like that of a large desk, was embellished with bizarre figures.

VI.

On the deserted paths of the Himalayas, that foreign object concealed a mystery!

By studying the signs chiseled on the strange casket, I tried to establish the origin of such a treasure, forgetting the bolide which showed its hollow flanks some steps from there.

VII.

Now, my suspense growing more and more, I grasped my dagger to break the bonds which kept the plates of the desk together. A slight effort more and the separate plates came unfastened. . . . Still I hesitated, for my heart was beating hard in my chest!

What could be concealed in that object buried in the cold regions of the grand mountains of Asia, at the highest limits of the inhabited world?

Were these the golden vessels of the gods of Banaras? the miter of a high priest of a temple of Buddha, or the diamonds of the Moguls' throne? Tell me, land of

Golconde, that hides in your bosom brilliants all aflame, did I find the jewelbox where your greedy rajah placed his most sparkling carbuncles?

And the seductive spirit of the marvelous delirium of these gilded dreams—oh! for an instant I feared being blinded by the flame one ray of sunlight could bring forth from the fire of riches enclosed in my hand.

Nevertheless, in trying to expel those splendid chimeras from my soul, the place, the object, and its appearance made me anticipate some rare treasure.

Shaking, I opened it.

VIII.

I found several books and a small number of papers in manuscript.

IX.

It was impossible for me to fathom the language of these writings. I did not recognize the signs of the language as those of one of the nations pivoting around the Himalaya mountains.

Uneasy and curious about such events and strange mysteries, I resolved from that time to take charge of the chest. It was a great resolution; for there, doubtless, I had an immense secret to discover.

X.

Before withdrawing, for one last time my gaze ran over that stark scene—for two days, two centuries, the solitary witness of my long anguish.

A shattered pyramid, the decapitated peak seemed to open to spill its snow down the mountains.

The bolide lay there, its gaping cavity facing the desk deposited at my feet.

XI.

In closing the desk I intended to carry, I thought I saw on one of its sides a splash of blood similar in color to that I had observed on the celestial stone. . . .

Shreds of his flesh were on the bolide; the Indian's blood—could it have spurted out to such a distance?

THE STARIAN BOOKS

The downward slopes of the paths were still obstructed by heaps of snow or interrupted by reefs of small stones. Carrying the load I had taken on among the higher peaks of the mountain, I descended two days more before regaining the cave where the Indian guides customarily have climbers cache the provisions which overburden them. I arrived there dying of hunger and fatigue, since I had nothing more in my game bag than some dry crusts of bread I had to soften in melted snow.

I rested half a day; and, my mind still full of the scenes that not long ago had appalled me, I opened the desk which had come into my possession. It was of precious wood covered with an envelope of chased metal. I pulled out some of the books and manuscripts it contained. They were not in Persian, nor Tibetan, nor Hindi, nor even Chinese or Sanskrit. The horizontal alignment and cursive union of the characters made them resemble more closely those employed by the European nations. Above all, the paper was of a closer and denser texture than I had ever seen before. I thought myself on the trail of some great historical mystery or of an important diplomatic secret.

My return was accomplished in various phases with diverse incidents. I have nothing to report of them here.

Having returned to my studies, I found myself ever confronting that library written in a language unknown even to the most expert archaeologists and linguists. I searched; I searched. Great was the attraction that drew me to guess the significance of those lines from which I could not take my eyes. I had the courage to begin again methodically, patiently, to do for that strange dialect the work of a Champollion. After six months of research, I had discovered the alphabet and finally could assemble

and articulate the words. From that moment, I allowed myself neither intermission nor relaxation before being able to decipher the sense of several passages of the manuscripts, and, above all, of the books, which seemed to me to contain an unknown history, an unknown science.

When two years of effort, attention, and study had initiated me into the workings of that language and opened the secrets of its translation, for several days there passed in my soul a tumult of numberless doubts, agonies, and hesitations. In proportion as I fathomed the sense of those works, a supreme vertigo made me breathless. Judge for yourself. . . .

Avidly, I searched some passages of the books for what I could relate to my everyday acquaintance; and, always interpreting, always translating, I found nothing of mankind or of things in this world. There was no question of sciences or customs or of things similar to the sciences, customs, and facts of this world; but I was unraveling, through my studies, the history and knowledge of a world to which ours appeared unknown.

Then, I summoned up the circumstances in which I had discovered the books in the solitudes of the Himalayas: that desk splashed with the blood of the Indian crushed by the aerolite's fall; that celestial stone which, in breaking apart, had revealed an interior cavity, at least half of which must have belonged to another piece of rock, lost in the snows of the mountain. Ah! I could not doubt it—the chest I had found within feet of the bolide had been enclosed in it. My ambitious delirium had made me anticipate a treasure in that metal box—and it contained a whole new universe.

I quickly wished to learn to what intelligent being these books belonged, on the globe of which the aerolite doubtless had been a detached part, and, above all, from whose hands I had those manuscripts, which I already recognized to be, for the most part, selections from the correspondence of two friends, two sages. Now, here is what an attentive reading of those papers taught me: that desk had belonged to one of the highest civil officers of a great nation on one of those worlds which the starred vault shows us at night scattered in the great void, in the immensity of the heavens.

Far from the tumult and passions of his fellows, he had chosen for himself a retreat in a home hollowed out

of the rock of a mountain sometimes shaken by volcanic earthquakes. There, in a nook also cut into the porphyry, he habitually placed in the depository desk his most cherished books and, above all, his most intimate thoughts in manuscript. I inferred from these details and circumstances that a crater must have opened in the part of the mountain where the sage's home was built and that, in a frightful eruption, its tongues of fire had thrown sections of the volcano's crust an infinite distance.

Who could say how long those stones, tossed about among the worlds, had remained wandering, until a powerful attraction or a divine breath came to hurl them onto an obscure planet like ours, but also perhaps into the bosom of a sun burning with light?

It was only when I had consulted the astronomical and cosmographical parts of my transstellar documents that I thought I could fix the position occupied by the world given me to study. In the ocean of visible suns, the disposition and number of luminous globes in the same vortex or planetary system led me to believe that it must be the system of the star designated in the catalogs as ψ in the constellation of Cassiopeia, that bizarre group of stars of which the five brightest mark the angles of an almost regular zigzag. I have given to that world the name of *Star,* which is fairly near the pronunciation of the word *Earth* in the language I had before me.

It was expedient for me to collect in this book the substance of the Starian books I translated; perhaps you will find that I have done it with less method than imagination.

BOOK I

TAKING POSSESSION

I.

Beyond the orbits of Uranus and Neptune, higher than the region of sky where Sirius blazes menaced by the sword of Orion, fix your gaze on the starred vault on the line which runs from Polaris to Andromeda; transport your imagination to distances greater than several million times the distance from Sirius to the Sun—equal to an unlimited, almost infinite, number of times the distance from the Sun to the Earth—and, that particle of the immensity of the heavens glimpsed imperfectly by your mind, go farther, farther still, ascend, ascend forever! . . . Perhaps then you will be able to reach in thought, in the depths of the constellation of Cassiopeia, a point perceptible in a telescope on fine and calm nights. That point, that particle of light, is the star of the constellation which astronomers designate by the Greek letter ψ and which, up there, the beings who think and speak call Star.

II.

In that vault of stars, in that sea of fires, which seem so many candles destined to light our gazes plunging into the fields of infinity, Star is only a spark strong enough to send us a filament of light; but, up there, in the vast vortex where it displays its resplendence, that faint glimmer is a harmonious system of satellites and suns, the least of which is equal to ours in size and splendor.

III.

It was toward that point in space that I directed my thoughts, and, completely permeated by the reading and study of my Starian books, I crossed the heavens faster than the speed of light; no longer did anything Terrestrial occupy my thoughts: I believed I was really on a planet in the solar system of Star.

Frightened at first by the audacity of my project and by the immense void, the limitless solitude, which perhaps awaited me, I anxiously searched for signs of the passage of intelligent and sociable beings: but soon reassured by the acquired certitude that nature, this sumptuous universe, would be neither rational nor complete if not inhabited by individuals capable of feeling and appreciating its poetic beauties, I zestfully surrendered myself to the hope of admiring and living, in spirit at least, on that marvelous sphere.

IV.

It is done! In one leap you have penetrated into this new universe with me.

Yet, if, in that etherean voyage we have just accomplished across the incommensurable ocean of space, our thoughts, grazing in their flight the stars strewn along the route like so many luminous islands, could have stopped a moment on a sun neighboring Star, they would first have been struck by a singular fact. Among the millions of worlds the night shows us hanging at various degrees in the sky, the planetary system of Star would appear a graceful pleiad of varicolored stars and would have been chosen at a distance, for the exploration of those globes would have been supremely seductive and compelling.

V.

But we have descended onto one sphere in this system of globes; we are on an earth warmed by its suns. Their heat is penetrating and inexpressible and their light soft as well as nuanced. And so, we propose to observe with

pleasure, for here day—and even night—have a magnificence unknown to our eyes. The region where we have set foot is rich and fertile, covered with close, vigorous, and exuberant vegetation. And it is on this dazzling life that we rest our eyes when they are forced, though with regret, to turn from the sky, where four suns of diverse size and coloration, four flowers of celestial light, enamel the sky and sparkle from different points on the horizon.

VI.

Would that I could borrow the image-filled and sonorous expressions of the Starian language to describe the sky kissed by its stars as it is in our festivals when the flashing jets of fireworks disperse in the air—with the difference that here each spark is a whole world of fire!

VII.

The largest disk, the central pivot, the true sun of the planetary system, is named Ruliel. Its immense sphere, whiter than a trail of lightning, radiates a light so intense and so diffuse that clouds cannot mask it entirely and its presence on the horizon attenuates the brightness of the other three suns.

At some distance from Ruliel, now rises Altéther with a surface and corona of transparent green: Altéther is the fine, green sun which often accompanies Ruliel. It precedes Ruliel like a splendid, gentle dawn and for some time still pours its soft rays on the earth when the great star has drowned its huge disk in the misty limbo of the west.

To the east also rises Urrias, the blazing red sun, the light of which, amended by the fires of Ruliel, throws out a web of pale rose rays, which redden toward the extreme horizon. Urrias is the sun closest to the planet called Star and, as we shall see later, is one of its satellites.

Finally, we hasten to admire the last bright star of this magnificent firmament, for Erragror, the sun with a pure blue disk, is already preparing to set and bathes that part of the sky with its soft and melancholy light.

VIII.

We now lower our eyes to the earth, which the fires of its stars inundate with thousands of reflections, thousands of nuances of white or colored light. Another spectacle awaits us—a spectacle wonderful and sublime as a whole, but also admirably surprising in its details.

IX.

Vast forests are before us. Some birds hovering in the air first reveal the existence of animate beings. Life and movement are already around us; we are no longer alone; but, above all, we want to find thinking beings, and a curious eagerness makes us hurry irresistibly in search of humanity. For . . . what are the human beings of this world? What form, what bearing, what intelligence will they disclose to us? And our imaginations, traveling with us, have already endowed them with monstrous organs and powers.

X.

Advancing, we are surprised at the enormous variation presented by the planet's vegetation. Indeed, trees of terrific vigor rise like mountains, like superb peaks; and under their canopies, shading a circumference of more than a thousand feet, delicate plants of a glazed transparency and microscopic tenuousness spread out their filiform roots.

The tallest species of tree, which dominates the distant faces of forests and sinks deep, winding channels in them, is the *syphus,* an immense plant with a thousand boughs incessantly diverging and its highest branches becoming lost in the clouds. There is nothing on the globe comparable in size to the syphus except a marine tree called the *tarrios,* which suspends vast forests over the liquid plains of the oceans.

XI.

The foliage of the syphus is of an orange color softened by the velvet texture of the leaves' borders; its flowers are clusters of delicate green. A generic uniformity of color is not found on this flourishing soil either in the foliage of the trees or in the stems of the plants which cover it. Gray, blue, green, and orange are the colors which most frequently clothe the leaves of plants; while the large and showy flowers are always in hues contrasting the foliage they accompany. We say in contrasting coloration whatever the daylight illuminating them, for we must not forget that, after the setting of Ruliel, the colors of objects in the Starian world change from moment to moment depending upon the blending or predominance of light radiated by the colored suns on the horizon.

XII.

We cross mysterious woods, where copses of trees similar to green and yellow madrepores or other corals raise to a man's height stone boughs covered with lovely blue flowers as hard and unyielding as plates of ivory. This sort of forest coral seems to be a singular species of monocotyledonous tree with an epidermis secreting a cuticle of very dense lime, which, drying in the air, envelops the trunk and branches like a sheath and gives the flowers the consistency, gleam, and hardness of porcelain. The wind playing through the branches of these trees produces metallic vibrations in chords following us with an aeolian and vaporous harmony.

XIII.

Our unforeseen arrival at the edge of a stream causes a strange tumult there. A multitude of shrubby trees with green, glossy leaves, surging up like birds, escape into the air moving their branches and leaves in the manner of wings and go to set themselves down on the banks some distance away. These bird-plants, named *bramiles,* are singular beings, which, with the structure of a plant, have

the sensitivity of an animal and the ability to move by flexing branches jointed at the trunk. Bramiles fix themselves along the margins of streams by means of single tuberculate feet equipped with roots or claw-shaped suckers that they sink into the moist earth. Their gathering and the movement of their branches give a melancholy animation to the banks of the rivers where they live.

XIV.

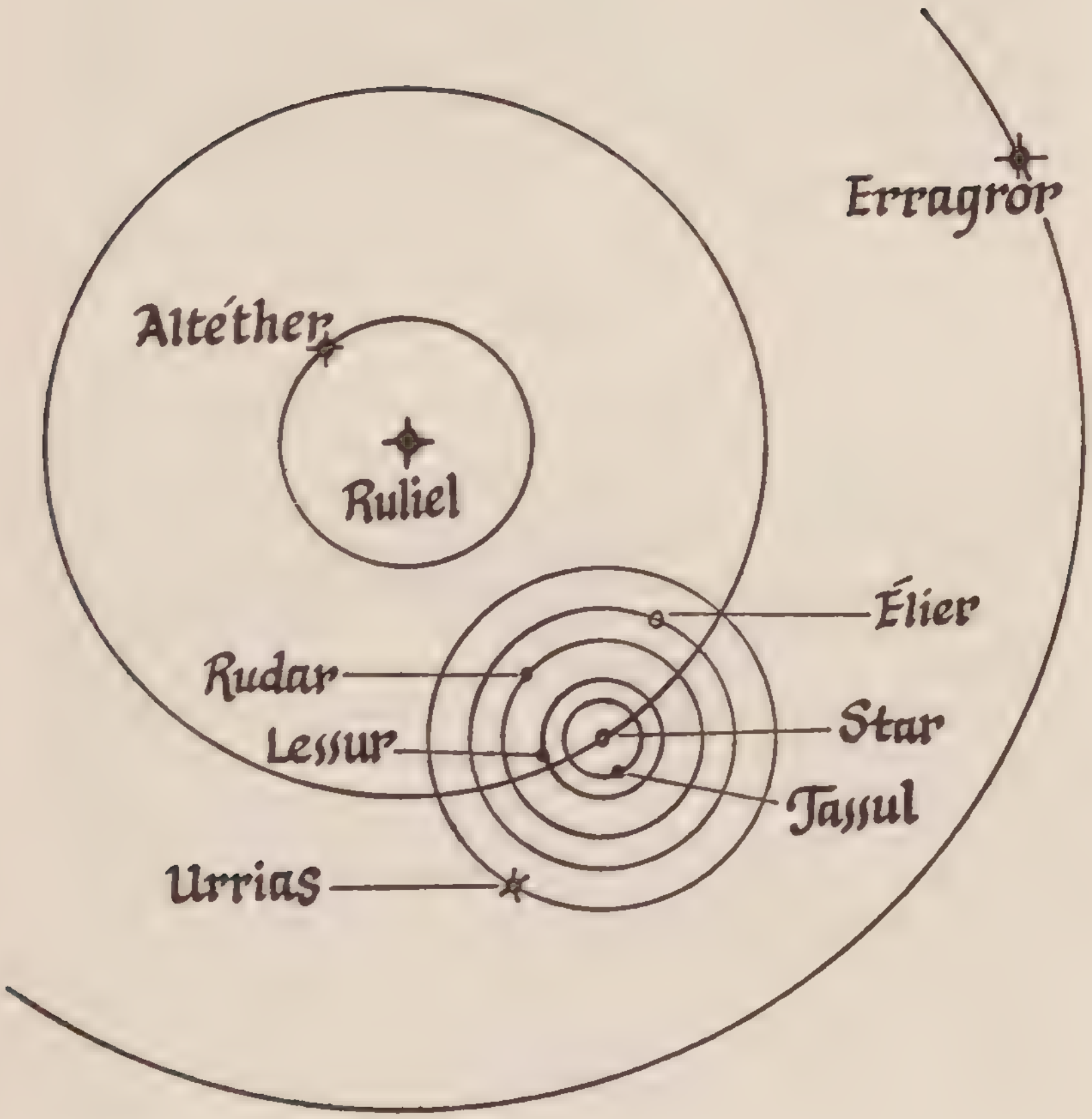
Wishing to orient ourselves on this earth unknown until now, we have climbed up the side of a high hill. The summit of the hill is found to be a promontory overlooking an immense sea. There, along the shores, are the tarrios spreading out their crowns at water level and forming so many green islands lulled by the waves. How many ideas of strength, majesty, and life rose up in us at the sight of these colossal trees, which, plunging their roots to the bottom of shallow seas or along beaches, raise powerful limbs above the waves by means of enormous trunks capable of resisting the stress of tides and tempests!

XV.

Imperceptibly, the suns have moved. Erragror has disappeared from the horizon, and Ruliel has followed it a short time afterward. Altéther itself shows its enlarged, green disk in the fluffy haze of the west. We have the privilege of seeing one of the incomplete nights of Star: while the multitude of stars eclipsed by the light of Ruliel become visible in the blue sky, the five moons or satellites of Star appear escorted by stars of the first magnitude. But such nights, which have so many mysterious charms along the waters or in the forests that surround us, bring out splendors in the sky which our fatigued eyes could not scrutinize without resting a moment.

XVI.

Star is the terrestrial globe, the inhabited and living sphere the name of which has served us to designate



generally the group of stars into which we have penetrated.

Star is a planetary mass of ample volume, and its orbit occupies the intermediate position of the system, almost equidistant between Altéther, the green sun, and Erragror, the blue sun. Star, like these two suns, gravitates around Ruliel, immobile at the center of the system.

Around Star, or the earth, move five small globes, of which the farthest and most voluminous is Urrias, one of the four suns streaking across the sky. The other four satellites, destitute of their own light, appear as so many moons upon which to rest the eyes in a firmament full of blinding brilliance. The first of these moons is named Tassul, the second is called Lessur, the third Rudar, and the fourth Élier. Such are, including the glittering strings of fiery stars, the riches of the night in this marvelous world.

XVII.

Star's twilights have a captivating magic. Despite the presence of Urrias and Altéther on the plane of the horizon, the disk of Tassul, illuminated in totality by the rays of Ruliel, rises clear and silvery in the east. Lessur presents a strange phenomenon; half its surface, receiving the white light of Ruliel, is the pale yellow color of Tassul touched with a nuance of blue, while the other half, reflecting only the rays of Erragror, presents a dim shade of blue. Rudar, on the other hand, lost amid the red and green fires of Urrias and Altéther, over our heads suspends its crescent gleaming with chameleon colors.

XVIII.

The blue sun is already lost behind the western mountains. The red sun is also inclining toward that quarter, tomb of all heavenly lights. For this earth, for these places always streaming with light, it is almost night—but a soft, tropical, and shimmering night.

At this moment, a singular star is rising in the blue of the opulent sky; among the Starians, it is always contemplated with wonder. The people call it Élier. This satellite of Star is a diaphanous globe, solid and compact

as an earth of crystal, but transparent as respirable air. Within the compass of the sky where so many carbuncles shine as in a great casket, Élier is the diamond in which all the fires of suns, moons, and stars play, cross each other, and are reflected. We see it, as it advances, project in distinct, blazing rays the colors of the rainbow. All the light of the suns, penetrating it together or one by one, spread out the blazing phantasmagoria of the refrangible colors of the solar spectrum or make warmly colored rings ripple from the center of the star toward the circumference.

XIX.

What brush could render the different phases of the physiognomy of day or night under the enchanted sky of Star, wrought by the revolution of its stars and the unexpected changes taking place each moment in their respective positions? Who could describe, above all, the phantasmagoria of changing lusters these stars display in the waves of the sea, when they plunge into the water with a wave, trembling on its surface or mirrored in the opal shimmer of its spume?

No, I tell you, nothing is lacking in the harmonious series of lighting effects which tint this earth and its enchanting skies, not even antithesis, not even profound darkness—for, though it is true that dark nights are rare for the Starians, they nevertheless do come occasionally, when some lingering moon or even some pale sun in its decline appears alone, veiled by an atmosphere of heavy clouds. Star, then, also has its shadows.

XX.

Oh, the brilliant and gentle night! a breath of warm wind brings us the roaring of the sea beating on the marble cliffs; then, at intervals, other, more distinct, sounds coming from the neighboring forests throw our souls—already amazed by such a beautiful spectacle—into an abyss of dreamy contemplation.

On the earth of Star, melody comes from every side, almost as widespread as the air skimming over the ground and rustling in the grass. Not only has nature given birth

to multitudes of birds, almost all with musical voices, but even mammiferous animals are heard, their passionate cries being songs the traveler hears at a distance with delight.

If there are humans in this harmonious world, they must stop sometimes to listen to the chords produced by a sort of tree-gourd swinging to and fro in the breeze. The fruit of this forest tree, called the *lartimor*, is suspended on long, flexible stalks or peduncles and consists of a nut with a shell of unusual hardness and elasticity. At maturity, the top of the nut turns toward the ground and opens, or, rather, uncovers itself and allows the liquid that fills it to run out. The empty shell remains thus for several years without alteration, and the sounds produced by groups of these shells of various diameters knocking against each other are harmonious notes which the wind makes sigh or roar according to whether it is calm or tempestuous. Ah, yes, if there are humans on this earth, the lartimor must have more than once revealed to them the harmonies of nature.

XXI.

Let us leave our somnolent and contemplative reverie, for Ruliel is rising to chase the penumbra from the earth; the white sun appears, and soon our eyes, aided by its clarity, have encompassed the final limits of the horizon to the east. As the light delineates objects more distinctly, we experience vague thrills of hope and fear. Finally, we cannot doubt it: it is indeed the distant prospect of a great city that we see at the very extremity of the visible horizon. Quick! forward, oh! hurry—for we long to meet and question the prince of creation on this splendid planet.

XXII.

Despite being carried away by curiosity, we are stopped in our course by the disturbing scene of a combat taking place over our heads. A graceful bird of azure blue, with a beak and wingtips of gold, appears before us. On its neck, it wears a white ribbon, a sign of domestication, and its presence also tells us of the proximity of habitations where the *citos*, which is the bird's name, is one of

the inmates most prized by the peoples of these countries. Suddenly, two black, shaggy birds with elongated heads and dreadful fiery red eyes spring upon the blue bird and, each seizing one wing, turn it upside down as if to tear it to pieces. At the cries of the citos, a white bird of monstrous size cleaves the air and, dealing two blows to the pirates with its enormous beak, rescues the citos and throws its dying attackers at our feet.

I have learned that the citos are revered and cherished birds, the agents of happiness, it is said, almost household gods for the Starians, who raise them in their houses, sometimes in flocks and sometimes singly. At first, this was for pleasure and later a little out of superstition. But the citos has a fierce natural enemy in the hideous bird called the *zayou,* or bird of ill omen, which might quickly destroy the species if the inhabitants of those countries did not for the defense of the citos take care to provide and instruct a kind of giant eagle to be the shepherd of each flock and to rescue its charges when, by chance, as in this case, one of them wanders a little too far from the domestic roof and finds itself attacked by the zayous.

XXIII.

What a land of extraordinary and variable aspects! At this moment, a thick cloud comes to obscure the image of Ruliel, the white sun; and, although it cannot completely obliterate the light of that disk, which is still visible through the mass of gray vapors like a bright moon on a clear night, nevertheless it has abated the penetrating light. At other points in space, the red and blue suns, with rays crossing areas free of clouds, slightly change certain parts of the landscape and color the mountains of the horizon an intense violet. But the cloud passes across the face of Ruliel, and immediately the tints of colored light pale and are obliterated.

XXIV.

When the winds drive along cloudy flocks and only the colored suns are above the horizon, it sometimes happens that—their rays escaping through the network, through the rifts in the cloudy fabric—a traveler may follow with

his eyes on the sides of the little humps blue, green, or rose spaces running and fleeing in the direction of the wind.

XXV.

Here even animal nature might seem fantastic in its productions. We have already encountered some very unusual animals in our path: but, wanting to approach a quadruped with close, white fur, to our great surprise, it seems to grow in size as it flees us, so that after a certain number of paces its volume has more than tripled. We accelerate our pace to take hold of this singular phenomenon; but, at the moment we are about to seize it, we see it rise into the air, first laboriously, then rapidly, without moving anything but its neck, which seems to serve it as a rudder. It disappears, carried off by a strong gust of wind, and goes to lower itself into a forest of orange-leaved syphus.[2]

XXVI.

The day is advancing, and we are about to stop at a bush with blue leaves to gather its perfumed, shining black flowers with distinctly moiréd petals, when we realize that our course has brought us to the entrance of a small market town, itself not far from the great city which we seek and which spreads out its immense suburbs in the distance. At this moment, our curiosity, on the point of being satisfied, hopes and fears to find the humanity of this world, so different from ours, overwhelming and supernatural in strength, intelligence, and majesty.

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[2]Here is what the Starian naturalists say of this animal, which they call the *psargino:* Its skin, which has great extensibility, is only attached at the eyes, the mouth, the other natural openings of the body and the soles of the feet. Over the rest of its expanse, it is only juxtaposed to another membrane or internal skin having the property of secreting, at the animal's will, a gas fifteen or twenty times lighter than air. The psargino, thus surrounded by gas, becomes a sort of balloon lighter than the atmosphere, and it makes use of this property to rise into the air and escape its enemies. A kind of aperture furnished with valvules on its abdomen relieves it of part or all of the gas burdening it and serves for descent to earth when the predator has lost its track.

We go forward; a small group of individuals of the Starian race appear. . . . They are like ourselves. . . . These are truly the mortals we know. Here, as everywhere, man is man; nature, up until now, has produced nothing more perfect.

XXVII.

To be sure, in structure the human species on the planet called Star is like ourselves; but with regard to the vital forces of reason, spirit, and heart, we will have numerous occasions in which to compare them with us.

XXVIII.

Impatient to penetrate to the heart of this unknown world, we have established ourselves without delay in the midst of the powerful city which had appeared to us in the distance. With its buildings and wharves, it borders an iridescent sea and the mouth of a river which at this point comes to mix its placid waters with the agitated waves of a Starian ocean. The city's immense roadstead is covered with vessels around which cavort *talersis,* huge marine monsters which the Starians have tamed for the service of ships plying the sea. We watch one of these ships arriving from the island of Infressia and entering the port in full sail, but still drawn by two talersis.

XXIX.

Viewed from a distance, the buildings seem of a bizarrely twisted architecture, but our attention is immediately and entirely absorbed by the living part of the city. Indeed, as we go forward, it is impossible to turn our eyes from the masses of people who restlessly swarm over the docks or are engulfed in the streets of the great metropolis.

Approaching more closely, we see that these people seem to consist of two nations, two very distinct races who live together and scatter pell-mell in the maze of streets. Both sexes of the larger race are beautiful, noble, and strong. The second race is small, hairy, and remarkable—before any investigation—for their large, creased and drooping ears, adorned with silky hair,

especially among individuals of the female sex. Only the first belong to the human species: strong and intelligent, above all on this earth, they are the superior and dominant race here. The second part of the population is nothing other than an inferior race, or, to be more precise, a nation of perfectible animals, endowed with more intelligence and ability than any of the others—but, in addition, like human beings, having effective hands and the faculty of expressing their ideas, the use of speech. These are the *repleus*, subject to mankind, who rule and command and have reduced them to domestication.

The human race is without affinity to the species of repleu. The former is to the latter what the horse is to the donkey, and their coupling produces only half-breeds incapable of reproduction. According to their means and personal needs, the Starians possess one or several repleus raised and instructed in different functions, but especially for service particular to the household. The height of the repleus is more than a meter; they walk upright, are agile and hardy, and, in comparison to the human race, their hands and feet are only a bit too large. Finally, their lives are half as long as those of humans.

XXX.

Horses and vehicles streak through the streets; on the river and in the bay, boats and gondolas are drawn by talersis, cetaceans swimming at water level with incredible speed.

XXXI.

The Starian women are extremely remarkable not only for their beauty, but even more for certain charms more particularly valued among the peoples of Star, that is to say, for their nobility, propriety, and integrity. The men distinguish themselves especially for their strength, candor, and activity: strong, frank, and active—here you have the Starians.

XXXII.

Such is a Starian city at first glance: under a magical sky, amid a superb and varied, expansive and lusty nature,

it presents itself with its monuments mirrored in the tides of a translucent sea which at once reflects its palaces, its vessels, and the omnicolored fires of its stars.

XXXIII.

The Starian peoples are monogamous. The pure family affections, which prevail among them in all sanctity, diffuse over their private lives a fragrance of gentle intoxication and of chaste, constant quietude. Does it not seem to you that, on that magnificent planet, the heart's needs, having become incapable of temptation and lack of restraint, must, in a stronger nature, have to be more fully satisfied? In addition, there are no domestic servants among the Starians. These degrading services are left to the repleus, almost all instructed to perform the lower functions of the household.

XXXIV.

With the repleu, the citos is the indispensable inmate of the house. These blue family birds, when in a flock watched over by a large, white bird, serve the Starians by ridding their houses of flies and other annoying insects. The citos is occupied part of the day in hunting insects; but, provided that it is prompted, it knows how to make a human habitation resound with low but sweet songs in which every variation is a complete melody.

The blue birds, with beaks and wingtips of gold, reproduce with difficulty but enjoy remarkable longevity. They are a part of the residence where they are raised and almost always die when transplanting them to another place is attempted. A Starian house dispossessed of its family of citos will be considered cursed and will be deserted by its inhabitants. A citos isolated from its fellows and raised with a child or long receiving the attention or caresses of a master becomes, for the rest of its life, his familiar and dies when the death of the cherished person or his prolonged absence separates them. When a citos is enfeoffed sympathetically to the existence of a person, it can then leave the domestic roof and travel with him; and, in addition, it knows, according to circumstances, how to pity, console, or cheer its master with touching melodies, so that the person always finds the

songs in harmony with the state of his soul. It is even asserted that the bird, having become sympathetic, can feel for a person loved by its master the sentiments of goodwill and tenderness, and that it soon comes to echo harmoniously the chaste passion of two lovers.

XXXV.

The Starians do not impose domesticity upon the half-breeds that result from the coupling of a human with a repleu. Such individuals, begotten of impure relations, are today more rare among the Starians. They are designated by the name of *cétracites*. Almost all of them are born of female repleus; a Starian woman who would forget herself to such an extent would be cursed and rejected by all. The cétracites cannot have offspring; nature has rendered them sterile. In general, they lead a miserable, and most often criminal, existence in the underworlds of populous cities. We will have to return to this bastard race, among whom several individuals were famous in the history of the Starian peoples.

XXXVI.

In walking through the city and its surroundings, the stranger, who sees on every side the fountains of almost scalding hot springs, is astonished at a soil so well disposed to render human life easy and agreeable. If we go back to the eastern suburbs of the city, our eyes are presented with splendid residences surrounded by gardens, where leaves and flowers assume an admirable brilliance. From orchard trees, in season, hang fruits which are bright, superb, savory in aroma and taste, with glazed, sweet and juicy flesh.

XXXVII.

Certain plants of these happy regions do not germinate or bear fruit until the arrival of spring and summer, when the light and heat of the sun have a quickening effect upon them. Ruliel, the white sun, for the most part governs the climate, the seasons, and the vegetation here. In their changes, all large plants follow its annual

ascending or descending progression along its ecliptic. Urrias, however, causes the ripening of certain garden plants bearing creamy fruit of an exquisite flavor. The fruit, which develops very quickly, promptly spoils. But the plant bears fruit several times a year, since a revolution of Urrias around Star is completed in less than sixty days.

The approach of Erragror, the blue sun, determines the maturity of certain plants useful to the arts and to industry. Finally, the heat of Altéther, the green sun, prompts, in the juices of plants sensitive to its influence, the production of perfumes dear to the lovers of sensual pleasure. The emanation of the perfumes, voluptuously striking the sense of smell, have the property of throwing the soul into a drowsiness accompanied by the most delightful, vague sensations and reveries of indescribable charm.

What more could one say of the Starians' gardens, if not that the union and progress of all these stars on the sky's plains at all times cause to spring from the earth the most charming, most varied flower-beds overburdened with subtle fragrances from all its flowers, elegant in color, in pattern, and in graceful detail.

XXXVIII.

It is principally in the warm valleys and along streams that the Starians know how to grow the largest and most beautiful *celsinores*, surely the largest corollas in a world so richly variegated. The celsinores are the gigantic flowers of a plant which meanders along the ground and covers it at some distance from the branches with finely serrated leaves. These flowers, adorned with the most delicate colors, measure on the ground a length of more than two meters; they have the form and dimensions of a spacious cradle. By ancient usage, celsinores are consecrated to marriage, forming the nuptial beds of young couples, who, in the splendid sanctuary of love, customarily spend the first night of their marriages on beds of velvety and perfumed stamens.

BOOK II

ANCIENT HISTORY

HEROIC TIMES

We have said enough to indicate in general the physiognomy of the new world we have discovered and to determine the setting and conditions of humanity's existence on this earth and under these skies. If some shades of the incomplete and vague still prevent the imagination from clearly perceiving the features of this marvelous whole, the history of mankind, the history of Starian society, which we are about to recount, will definitely give us a comprehension of the planet and dissolve the mist through which the mind was forced to see it until now.

As always happens when men seek each other out and assemble to live under a common law, to constitute themselves a society, heroic legend and tradition most often remain the only documents by which the historian may study those times which are called mythological.

In the first centuries of the societies of Star's world, three generative peoples present themselves to us at the corners of the earth, each, on its own part, possessing the rudiments of civilization founded upon mythological traditions. From whence came these peoples, or rather, from whence came mankind? Did all the races of the inhabited world have a common origin? Each of the three peoples prided itself on its antiquity. All three were said to have been the cradle of the human species; none but their respective gods had created the first men. Yet they were at the extreme limits of their world. From this one might infer, in all logic, that the first humans, born no one knows where, were created by a God who was not

one of their gods, and that no monument or tradition preserved the memory of that sublime effort of creative nature. Alas! how many doubts and cares would have been spared mankind if that God, after completing his work, had deigned to speak to his creature! But no, the first created men were not even conscious of the act of which they were the object; they did not even feel the touch of the mysterious hand that presided over the composition of their beings.

The three aboriginal nations were the Savelces, the Tréliors, and the Ponarbates, and their cities were named Savel, Trélée, and Ponarbas. The history of the ancient Starian world is nearly summed up in the history of these three peoples. We will now attempt to outline their principal traits in turn.

THE SAVELCES

The dominion of the Savelces, which later finished by embracing all the middle and southern parts of the eastern continent, was first confined to the territory of Savel, a city located on the shores of the iridescent sea to the south of the continent. Theocracy was the first form of government among the Savelces, so that their history is intimately connected with that of the fables by means of which their priests had won the faith and veneration of the people in their primitive ignorance. The religious beliefs of the Savelces were remarkable for more than one reason; their mythology rests entirely on the following fable:

In the beginning, on the earth and in the sky, there was Panéther, who was later ruler of the gods. But besides him, there also existed eternally an Oxyure, a sort of small worm. Panéther, having only the Oxyure as a contemporary and companion, mated with it and produced a May-bug larva. Panéther, seeing that more perfect animal, united with the May-bug, and the result of the union was a bat. Here Panéther proudly began to contemplate his work, and it was from his passion for the bat that were born the first man, named Poub, and the first woman, called Minélis. When Panéther saw the marvelous creature called woman, he wanted to fight with the man for her; but the latter had already made her his partner and the

first two humans had several children. Nevertheless, it is told that Panéther, tormented by longing and passion, made Minélis fail in her duty, and that the fruits of her infidelities were several gods who presided over the things of nature, under the surveillance and dominion of the great Panéther. The gods, sons of Panéther, were sterile, but mankind multiplied infinitely.

A cult and ceremonies were instituted at Savel and elsewhere in honor of these gods. The Bat, the May-bug, and even the Oxyure had famous temples, and above all, numerous and contentious priests. These last, abusing the credulity of the people, disputed with one another over power and preeminence. Factions led by the priests of the May-bug and of Rerriton, god of fire and son of Panéther and of Minélis, became dogmatic enemies and bloodied the state for more than a century.

Meanwhile, travels and navigation, having become easier through the training of the talersis, which the Savelces were the first to domesticate, gave some rest to that poor little state, so tormented up to that time. Seafarers from Savel were the first to land on the island in the ocean surmounted by the peak since consecrated to Rerriton. This island is nothing more than an enormous volcanic mountain with a base plunging into the sea and a summit smoking at six times the height of the highest mountains of Star. It rose above the ocean like a terrible beacon, which could be seen even from Savel.

In Starian antiquity, the Savelces were certainly the most ignorant and least wise of peoples and those for whom humanity and history have the most to be ashamed; for they were a warlike and fanatical people, they were a conquering people. The priests of Rerriton, having become the strongest, smashed the altars of the other gods, not excepting those of Panéther, and imposed on the people the exclusive worship of their god.

The devout and the hypocritical among the Savelces had the custom of making pilgrimages to the mountain of Rerriton, and those who climbed to the greatest height on the slopes of the immense mountain were venerated as saints and were considered prophets of the god who had put into them, it was said, a spark of purest fire. Some of those fanatics perished on their ascents; others, attaining prodigious heights, found themselves attacked by a dreadful vertigo and, half asphyxiated by the rarefied

atmosphere, redescending, were struck down by insanity. When they returned to their country, their fellow citizens did not fail to attribute their madness to divine inspiration. Then they were dragged from market town to market town to instruct and fanaticize the people, who listened to that sacred folly.

It was through the preaching of one of these religious madmen that international war was born on the earth and that the power of the Savelces was extended over their peaceful neighbors. That man, named Stratiote, was struck with insanity at the moment of an eruptive shock on the mountain and returned to Savel raving, preaching war and conquest. The priests and the majority of the nation deliberated at first; but Stratiote, having assembled the people on the shore, threatened them with the fury of their god, whom the Savelces believed they saw with a blazing mouth and heard roaring indistinctly. Nothing more was necessary. They took arms, equipped themselves, and, under the command of the inspired madman, the Savelces threw themselves upon the neighboring peoples, who, understanding nothing of such madness or of cruelty unknown until then, scarcely defended themselves, thinking indeed to recover their unguarded independence when reason returned to the conquerors. The war and invasion lasted nearly six years, that is, as long as the eruption of the volcano. And at the end of that time, the Savelces found themselves masters of an empire extending several thousand leagues.

Luckily, the nations embraced by the empire, after having consulted among themselves, had no trouble shaking off the yoke of that handful of raging fools—but, so that in the future no such scourge might fall on them, they all sent to Savel delegates who, united in assembly, founded among their peoples a confederation which preserved the name of the Savelce Empire.

Such was the influence that the small tribe of Savelces had over the civilization of the part of the world in the east and south of the eastern continent. The rest of the history of this society established through the need to repudiate war and invasion offers nothing worthy of report in this historical survey. The sequel of the social life of these peoples is as peaceful as the beginning had been tormented.

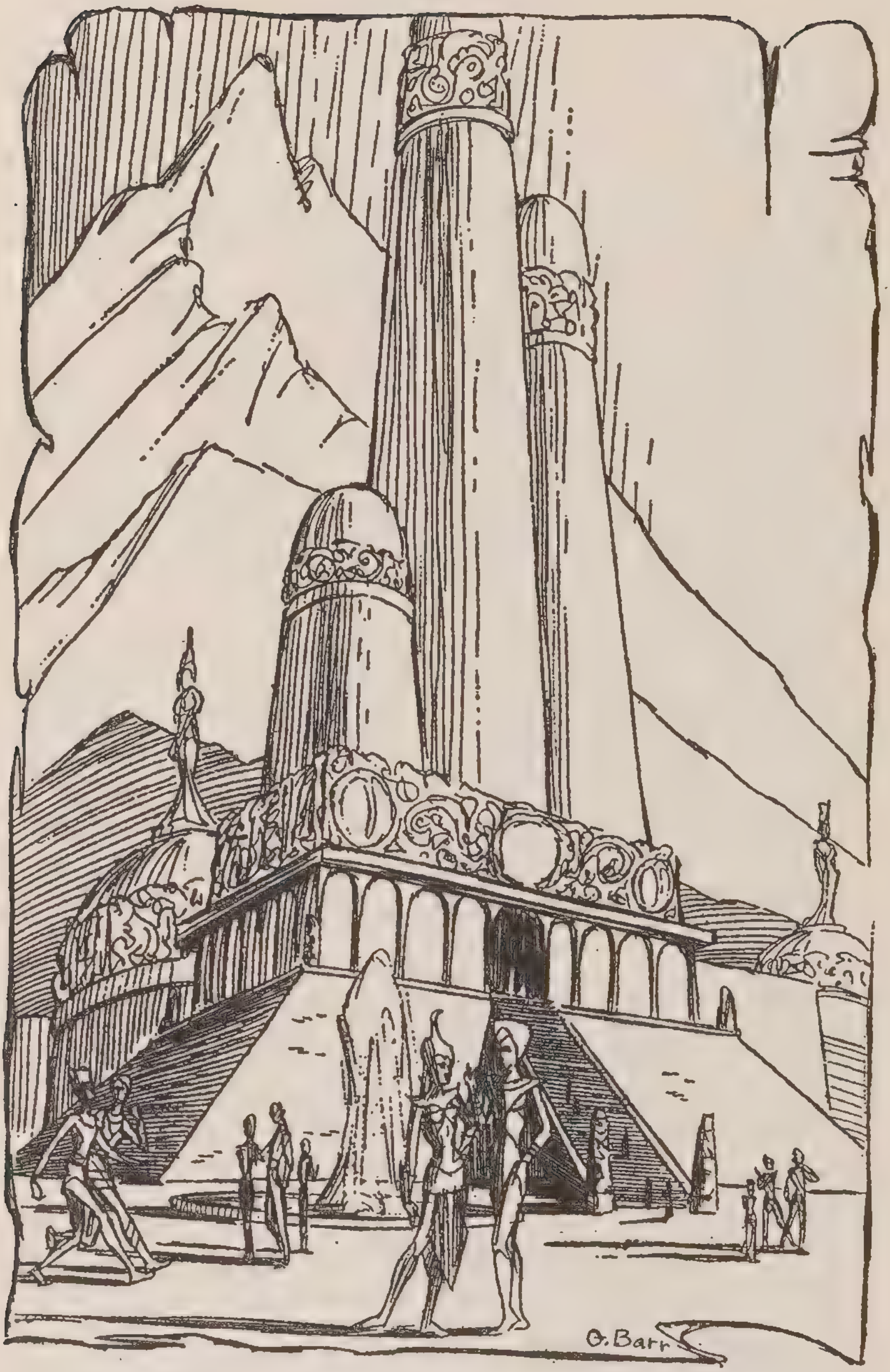
THE PONARBATES

At about the same time that convulsions were creating the Savelce Empire, the city of Ponarbas, located in the west of the western continent, began to rise out of obscurity. Originally, the Ponarbates were nothing more than the poor and ignorant clans of those regions, who, without religious or social dogmas, were gropingly organizing their half-savage communities. The country occupied by the tribe of Ponarbates had a magnificent climate, in which, without cultivation, the soil produced everything necessary to life. Material needs, always easily gratified, increased from that time because of the well-being already realized. Gradually, the eagerness for physical pleasures among certain families gave birth to the desire to consult one another and to live together for work and trade. A certain number of families assembled at first, and the city of Ponarbas was founded in a valley splendid with vegetation.

In the contract of union of those few hundred individuals, it was agreed that children, the aged, and the disabled—without, however, being separated from their families—would be supported by society, and that for no reason could a person possess more land than he could cultivate himself: in a word, that no one could have on his hands a land value impossible to manage or bring to fruition personally. It was held a principle of honor and of law that one consume all the fruits of one's labor and trade.

One could not describe what a society so established, consumed with activity and insatiable in wants, produced in riches and luxury. It was so unforeseen a spectacle and so encouraging an example to the Ponarbates' neighbors that the other hunting or pastoral tribes round about—all wise and gentle peoples—came closer and closer to the model of Ponarbate society, to which they came requesting laws and master-workers. The multiplication of these powerfully laboring and actively consuming hives, allied for work and commerce, carried the Ponarbate Empire to the highest degree of luxury and social affluence.

Occupied with material things, accustomed to relying


O. Barr

upon themselves, and, in addition, confident in their own thought and strength, the Ponarbates imagined no gods. Their first moralists or philosophers attributed the original creation or generation of mankind to ancient transformations of animal species, when some individuals by chance gave birth to superior types which formed a new stock. Thus, humanity, according to them, was derived from the repleus, which themselves were derived, thousands of centuries before, from the kind of animal immediately inferior, and so on.

Indeed, without religious faith, this people, finding in the splendor of their skies a source of infinite admiration, instituted a solemn cult for each of the principal stars; but these cults were simply the sincere and naïve testimony of their admiration, for the Ponarbates never dreamed of worshiping them as gods. A religious point of view—praying, adoring, fearing—were ideas always absent from their minds. In that society, were not all, moreover, the Providence of each? Thus, they had never known any other cult than consisted in admiring and extolling their splendid nature and their dazzling sky. The Ponarbates had the custom of placing in their temples the most marvelous products of their skill, making the temples veritable artistic and industrial museums on the pediments of which were engraved this formula of the people's social virtues: *Labor and Lavishness*. The Ponarbates were the first to capture and tame the amiable blue bird with gold wingtips, the citos, that, faithful guardian of the homes of mankind, unites instinctively and sympathetically with its master and that always has gentle songs to soothe his pains or magnify his pleasures. Such is the origin of the intimate attachment the Starians have since had for this bird with its graceful, elegant form and delicate, charming coloration.

If all the peoples of the western continent did not adopt the customs and social forms of the Ponarbates, all did often come among them to observe marvels of the industrial arts. Even the highlanders from picturesque regions watered by the Inrer were always flocking to Ponarbas as if on an obligatory pilgrimage, and, tribe by tribe, successively were leaving the tormented soil of their country to come to contemplate a beautiful climate, prodigious commercial activity, and, after work, pleasure involving all material goods.

THE TRÉLIORS

Among the small cities which, at the perceptible beginnings of nations, were located on the banks of the Saguir one would scarcely have noticed the town of Trélée. Rising from initial weakness, it owed the ascendancy it exercised over the destinies of Star's northern peoples to the basic idea, the civilizing idea, which grouped under the same faith and the same cult innumerable tribes which up to that time had crawled along in the abject barbarity of a life employed in satisfying gross appetites.

Nevertheless, among all the peoples of those regions, the Tréliors were already renowned for liveliness of character and sharpness of intelligence and were even more esteemed for the nobility of their race. Together, these qualities later could not fail to bring forth among them enthusiasm for elegance of mind and body; but, in the era of which we are speaking, even with such physical and intellectual inclinations, the Tréliors were still uncultivated savages, like the peoples dispersed around them.

In the middle of their city of huts, they ordinarily celebrated their national festivals by public feasts, hideous saturnalias which brought all ages together pell-mell. But one day, in the very precincts of the feast, suddenly appeared, as if to take part in the banquet, a girl adorned with divine allurement, a woman of beauty unknown to their eyes and such that, previously, they would not have dreamed of conceiving anything so perfect, so dazzling. At that apparition, the Tréliors abandoned the smoking meat and the amphoras where they drew out drunkenness and brutalization; respectfully they pressed about the young woman. She was a messenger descended from the sky to them. Their admiration was translated into presents. A palace was given her as a residence. Then, enthusiasm growing, the imaginations of the young men were set afire; their verve blazed on behalf of the beautiful Starilla, and poetry was born.

They were not content to stop there. A cult was instituted on behalf of the princess of beauty; her palace became a temple; and her servants, naturally, became priests. In short, from that day, the religion of the

Tréliors was founded and, through it, a fortunate and amiable transformation was accomplished in the people's laws and customs. Starilla, say the Trélior mythologists, had only passed through Trélée; but her memory and faith in her remained. That memory was living, that faith ardent—for the discourses and songs of her apostles, the poets, thrilled half the barbaric world with descriptions of her bashful charms. *Facta est lux!* for those astonished people, shedding the swaddling clothes of barbarity, for the first time attempted to lead the intellectual life.

After the apostolate which impassioned and regenerated the nations, Trélée found itself the city of beauty, the city of the arts, the holy city, and, as such, the capital of the peoples united in the same love. The government of the Tréliors was in complete conformity with their customs and tastes. Every five years, the delegates of the federated peoples of the empire assembled at Trélée, then chose as the executive of the laws they agreed upon the most beautiful of the young women who had come there to contend for authority. The laws were accepted and obeyed by the Tréliors with respect and happiness, since they seemed to be the emanation and the desire of their beautiful sovereign.

An art entirely in harmony with the customs of the Tréliors had its birth in the temples of Starilla. Its purpose was the beautification of humanity, and it consisted of procedures which could produce or complement human beauty. This art, in a word, was a kind of beauty culture.[3] The priests of Starilla cultivated the art from the earliest times, and were the first beauticians and plastic surgeons. The Tréliors sought beauty in physical form as other peoples loved the luxuriousness of clothing. The art of beautification became such a general practice among them that almost everyone was graceful and good-looking, and deformities of the body had become the rarest matters.

The Starian world also owed to the Tréliors the subjugation and habituation to domestic work of the species of repleus. The repleus, remaining wild in the hearts of forests or in uncultivated wastelands, had until then fled all traces of mankind. They lived in family groups, feeding upon fish, game, and fruits. When humans were

[3]See *Essai de Calliplastie* by Dr. Cid (Paris, 1846).

domesticating them, attempting to educate them, it was observed that individuals of the same family had among themselves a certain language of a few words or a few sounds, and it was not doubted that this ability could be extended: thus, they were taught to speak human language. Then the humans saw that wild species become more and more perfectible and docile in its lessons. In short, the human race, until then alone educated and intelligent, brought from the state of nature, the state of bestiality, another race, also intelligent, though inferior, that lived side by side with them, having, like the human race, its customs and tastes, its social relations and aptitudes. Nevertheless, the humans kept at a distance—I will not say that between animal and man, but between slave and master.

The dominion of the Tréliors, more moral than material, extended from east to west up to the limits of the Savelce and Ponarbate empires. Those empires, founded earlier than that of the Tréliors, included peoples who remained faithful to their customs and beliefs and over whom the dawn of civilization originating in Trélée could have little effect.

We have now come to the period when international relations among the three empires began. Commerce and navigation attained their greatest development. It was in this period that ships launched by the Tréliors discovered the island of Tastot which, soon explored by other navigators, made known to human beings another kind of humanity a little different from them: the Nemsèdes or Longevouses.

NEMSÈDES OR LONGEVOUSES

The Tréliors found about one hundred of these people, living in small groups scattered over the vast expanse of the island of Tastot. The Nemsèdes were about one third taller than the tallest among the Tréliors; their hair was deep blue, their eyes soft green, their bearings grave, and their physiognomies gentle and benevolent. They were all of the same sex, or rather had no sex.

These people, who all knew one another by having long lived together, had finally divided into small groups composed of friends united in the greatest intimacy. They

said that they were more than a thousand years old. None of them knew a father or mother. But they remembered being born nearly all together and at the same time in the heart of forests with trees whose fruit, in falling, spilled out a milk which was their first food. They had further observed that, in their childhood, nature had had an infinitely greater force of life and development than at this time; that, before, the highest trees had grown more than two hundred cubits in one year. There was born from the sour lime of the soil heated by electric air and subterranean fire a multitude of animals which had never again appeared on the earth and which then disappeared suddenly, because they lacked some of the structural characteristics necessary to life or reproduction. From the remains of these animals and the detritus of plants, other beings came teeming, and matter took on exuberant forms. Ignis fatuus scintillated from all the fissures of that fermenting humus. Finally, little by little, those incomplete creations came to an end, and the earth took on the aspect that it presents today. Despite their age, the Nemsèdes were not conscious of having lost either their strength or youth. Those among them who had died had been killed in accidents.

Those people, who endowed with superior reason, having lived and reflected so long, were soon regarded with respect and admiration by all the Starians. The greatest number of them decided to leave the island of Tastot in order to bring to Star's peoples the lessons of their experience and wisdom. Among other humans, the Longevouses, incapable of physical passions, almost all became enamored of an art or science. Each of them pursued his preferred science or art without intermission through the centuries, and their influence on the progress of the Starian world was great and would have been even greater had it not been for the evils which later decimated the planet's people.

Among the groups, or families, which the Tréliors discovered successively in the forests or in the mountains, they distinguished above all the union of three Longevouses sequestered in the center of the island, on the shores of a lake surrounded on all sides by mountains and without communication with the rest of the island. These three friends, revered even among their fellow

creatures, were named Cosmaël, Séelevelt, and Mundaltor.

It was noticed that, in following the other humans onto the continents and in establishing themselves in diverse countries, the Nemsèdes of each group never left each other. Few of those strange people remained on Tastot; some thirty families, including a total of three or four hundred individuals, dispersed into every corner of the world.

The three friends, Cosmaël, Séelevelt, and Mundaltor, traveling over almost the whole earth, observed and studied all the knowledge the Starian generations had accumulated in the sciences, arts, and letters. Cosmaël chose to study the physical and natural sciences, Mundaltor cultivated the fine arts, and Séelevelt devoted himself entirely to philosophy and literature. These three people, united in soul and feeling and communicating to each other each moment their observations and thoughts, thus embraced the whole of human knowledge. They lived in this way for several centuries, occupying themselves without intermission with the beloved objects of their studies; and, attentive spectators of the progress of thought and custom in the Starian societies, they collected, after each dead generation, the essence of the experience that it left as a heritage.

Accordingly, we could, with the three principal Longevouses, have you attend the international debates of the three empires which comprised the ancient Starian world. Here, however, we will pass over the political history of eight centuries, which, despite some baseness, more often recounts the sobriety of a peace fruitful in well-being, in productions of the mind, and in a great number of generous actions.

THE SLOW PLAGUE

The three sovereign peoples of the earth were vying with each other in the way of progress of spirit and intellectual well-being when, about fifteen hundred years after the founding of the Savelce, Trélior, and Ponarbate societies, that world of pleasant climates, splendid skies, and rich, beautiful nature began to be troubled. The lands of Star, so accommodating and well disposed to

generously nourish and delightfully support a strong race of men, seemed to belch forth all sorts of ills against those who then lived and to become an injurious and harsh mother to them.

At first, there were subterranean shocks that ran from one pole to the other and left in their paths vast fissures in the ground. At the bottom of those gulfs boiled lava which poured out into the air a horrible mephitis. That was the signal of the ill-fated times which the Starians have named the Age of Evil. The displacements in the earth's crust, which shifted the seas, and, soon after, the ebb and flow of twenty successive floods caused innumerable men and animals to die.

When the earth's strata finally returned to the calm of their apparent immovability, the soil seemed to have lost its vegetative power. Natural processes behaved as if deprived of their most energetic leaven, of those that, moving with intelligence, were the highest productions of the scale of organisms; those processes, I say, let the tallest trees be stunted and seemed to have concentrated their activity upon giving life to lower plants and inferior animals. At the same time that the large animals and most complex plants were disappearing from the earth, mankind saw born beneath their feet species of fossil animals and rudimentary plants long buried in the strata of the earth, the grave of primitive and antediluvian creatures. Creation was returning in its course. A famine lasting several years was the result of this impoverishment of the earth's vegetative power. Mankind, crying out under the scourge, succumbed in part, to the degree that in the twenty-fifth year of the Age of Evil, Starian humanity was reduced by one third. The repleus, already inferior in numbers to the humans, had been decimated in the same proportion, and several families of Nemsèdes had also perished as victims of cataclysms.

For some time, the fury of the evils burdening the world seemed to subside; the earth decked itself with fruit and crops as before. People attempted to collect themselves and to heal the wounds dealt the human family. This in itself already contained the seeds of an evil a thousand times more atrocious than all those which had lately sown consternation and death among them. It was from this time that dated that *slow plague* which made of the Starian earth a hell of suffering.

The beginnings were insidious: it struck a few individuals here and there, thus revealing to mankind a new infirmity, a disease previously unknown. From the onset of the illness until shortly before death, which was inevitable, it was accompanied by extreme intestinal pains —steady, burning, throbbing, and uninterrupted. On the average, however, death did not occur for ten years. Women, children, sailors, and the inhabitants of the seacoasts died most quickly. That pain, which for years constantly brought forth shrieks from the unfortunates it tortured—that pain did not kill. Among all the sick, a decay, which came to destroy the whole organism fiber by fiber and even thinned the bones, at last forced death to deliver the victims from their suffering.

Some months before dying, the plague-stricken, at the same time they found their intestinal pain diminishing, felt on the tops of their heads an agreeable tremor, a veritable impression of pleasure. Soon, the pain diminished further and even ceased among those individuals passed into a cadaverous state, and the sensation of pleasure gained in intensity, becoming immoderately keen and permanent. Well! that, for the sick person, was the cruelest moment. The excess of sensual pleasure which convulsed his moribund body and which he could not master an instant became, by its continuance, the most appalling torment to which the victim had yet been subjected: he would die panting in the midst of transports of pleasure which were devouring the remains of his hideous skeleton. Oh! it was horrible, and one could scarcely comprehend that state by comparing it to that of a consumptive arrived at marasmus and, during each moment of an eternal year, thrown into an irrepressible spasm of love which deeply penetrates him with the incessant titillation of the most bitter sensual pleasure.

The disease, which in the first months struck only a small number, spread little by little and reached the great majority of the human species. Some repleus succumbed to attacks of the slow plague, but the illness weighed very lightly on that domestic species. There was neither city nor tribe that was not visited by the plague; and on the highways there were families from every part of the world who were leaving their countries, going in opposite directions, searching everywhere for a more healthful climate or a remedy for their suffering. The

displacement of the nations, all leaving their countries and driven back in their wanderings, demanding of one another help against an evil forever becoming more frequent and more atrocious, intermingled to such an extent that all governments were dissolved and all societies unrecognizable.

It was then that in that afflicted world appeared one of those men who dominate crowds with their powerful voices. His name was Farnozas. He was eloquent and persuasive and had already acquired some celebrity in science and medicine, especially in the country of the Savelces, where he was a native.

SUICIDE

The plague had already lasted forty years. Almost all the seamen, and women and children in great numbers, had been or were becoming victims of the epidemic. In each locality there were only a few able-bodied men amid populations whose agonies made them lament in vociferous blasphemies. The despair of the sick often drove them to madness or suicide.

Farnozas, during this time, roved the world. With irresistible ardor, he harangued the multitudes who pressed around him. He recommended that the Starians, dishabituated to superstition for several centuries, try singular practices of his invention. On every side, suffering gave birth to the most despicable fetishism. Monstrous idols were worshiped and implored with transports of passion.

Still the scourge gained in intensity.

Farnozas again set out to travel through the world preaching, but this time he threw out an immense cry of despair to the masses. It was all over, according to him: the annihilation of mankind was going to be consummated; two thirds of the mortals had perished in sixty years, the rest would drag themselves along some time yet, to expire without assistance in a horrible and solitary agony. Then he proposed to those who listened to him—and they were most often disconsolate plague victims—a course of action suggested to him by his pity, his steady and sincere mercy. It was necessary to rob anguish of its last nourishment; it was necessary immediately and in one stroke to annihilate the remainder of mankind; for the

sake of humanity, it was necessary to quickly destroy humankind. Long outcries of agreement answered him on every side. Soon he found himself in the midst of an army of mad people preaching suicide to all and often publicly giving example. All the idols, not long ago objects of the most extravagant honors, were thrown into the sewers.

Farnozas' sectarians, seeing that a large number of individuals were rejecting their doctrines, set about murdering the refractory everywhere. Their favorite weapon was a small bow of fine steel with a prodigious elasticity, which, after a slight effort, rapidly shot a small, extremely keen arrow. This instrument has remained the weapon of murderers among the Starians because it kills silently and perhaps more surely than any other.

Most of the Longevouses, pitying that homicidal folly, wished to use their influence over the people (because of their age and beneficence) to oppose Farnozas' views; but the mob, envious at seeing that race escape the attacks of the scourge, scorned their orations and even involved them in the project of destruction. Some of the most celebrated were assassinated in the midst of their preaching. Argantur, Pérannor, Narraful, and others less well-known perished in this way. The three friends Cosmaël, Séelevelt, and Mundaltor stole away from the pursuits of the Farnozians and resolved to try by all means to escape death and to preserve, if they could, some individuals, or reproductive types, of the human race.

An innumerable quantity of furious disciples tested by Farnozas came and went in every direction forcing to suicide or delivering to death all who fled their pursuit. Many fainthearted people preferred to kill themselves than to be killed; others feigned enthusiasm and were admitted among the drawers of the bow, hoping thus to gain time and later be able to escape their shafts.

The following piece, which we translate conserving as much as possible its original qualities, will, better than any description, yield the measure of the cruelties in that mournful epoch of Starian history. This poetry was written at the time of the last and most furious preachings of Farnozas.

MASSACRE DURING THE SLOW PLAGUE

Savelce Poetry

I.

THE SICK MOTHER

Anguish alone replies to prayer in this domain!
Successively, I've implored all gods, from the Eternal Intelligence to the fetishes of unclean animals, but my sickness has only become more consuming.
Anguish alone replies to prayer in this domain!

More than gods, on the earth, tortures reign.
Oh! most certainly, a powerful and sympathetic God would not leave each man ten years with every fiber writhing so under the dreadful lacerations of this slow plague.
More than gods, on the earth, tortures reign.

And my children! their breath is polluted by the bane.
All, save my eldest son, have succumbed to attacks of the scourge. At this very moment, they turn over and over, prey to the evil's convulsions.
My poor children! their breath is polluted by the bane.

Mother, I'm burning; oh! come and soothe my pain!
Last month, your father died—as dried as this iron bar —suffering from acute voluptuousness, in the anguish of the most agonizing pleasure.
Mother, I'm burning; oh! come and soothe my pain!

If I still had a heart, my pity would be vain.
For seven years, your mother's bowels have also burned

with the fire that consumes you. Patience, children; you are young, without strength, and the sickness will be shorter for you.
If I still had a heart, my pity would be vain.

Listen, then, to the songs that rise from the plain!
Oh! if it were the sound of Farnozas' disciples, children! we would be saved and cured; for death would be near.
Now, do you hear those songs that rise from the plain?

II.

SONG OF THE DRAWERS OF THE BOW

Farnozas, a terrible reinforcement comes to you!
We are two hundred thousand, and the immense corps
Is dedicated and arrayed for your work of slaughter.
Farnozas, a terrible reinforcement comes to you!

Observe that all are writhing and torn in our retinue.
It's the plague, and our ranks, where all are lost in misery,
Have only this war cry: Oh, agony! Oh, agony!
Observe that all are writhing and torn in our retinue.

Only blood can soothe the caustic burning that gnaws us, too.
For during the carnage and its fiery enthusiasm,
Our bowels no longer feel the cramp that oppresses them.
Only blood can soothe the caustic burning that gnaws us, too.

By our work, the human race is already few.
Guide us, Farnozas, whose profound compassion has vowed
To extirpate humanity from the wide world.
Hurrah! by our work, the human race is already few!

Any humankind blesses the work of death we do.
The crowds, vying with one another, bring us their bodies
And everywhere days of massacre are jubilees.
Yes, we, as murderers, are blessed for the work we do!

III.

PLAGUE-STRICKEN LITTLE ONES

Have you lost the fragrance of youthful, untainted flesh, then?

Has the habitual stench of corpses deadened your senses, my fine bloodhounds? Alas! for so long the earth has had no other perfumes. Come in! In this hut there are still shreds of human meat throbbing and quivering. Come, breathe on these remains of life. This way! This way!

Have you lost the fragrance of youthful, untainted flesh, then?

As they're withering in their beds, kill these eleven children.

These children are mine. What! are you crying, poor little creatures? Ah, forgive me for having conceived you and having carried you in my womb; but thank me for ending your suffering, since, in your agony, there can be no rest but in death and no hope but in annihilation.

As they're withering in their beds, kill these eleven children.

Their death is quick! Soldier, in killing, how you hasten!

Your blade has already driven into the throats of the first eight. Stop a little! so I can embrace the three that remain before they go to join their brothers. But, above all, don't touch my twelfth child, my eldest son. You must respect the one the plague respected.

Stop, soldier! my turn is coming, and I also tremble, I...

Yet stop, soldier! In execution, how you hasten!

IV.

THE OFFICE OF THE BOWMEN

THE MOTHER

Treachery! Treachery! They're taking away my healthy child; they're taking away my oldest son for the slaughter, too! Leave him, you barbarians! Stop, you scum!

THE DECURION OF THE BOWMEN

Form a circle; soldiers, draw your arrows.

THE MOTHER

But he's well, I tell you! You don't want to be crueler than the scourge. . . . Cowards . . . but listen to me!

THE DECURION

Soldiers, bend your bows . . . abreast . . . fit your arrows.

THE MOTHER

By God, mercy! Don't forget it was I who gave up eleven of my children, that I'm giving myself to your shafts. Ah! for pity! be satisfied with my sacrifice.

THE DECURION

Raise your bows, archers . . . fire your arrows.

THE MOTHER

Horrible! the ten darts have converged in a sheaf at his heart. Not one of you is innocent of his death. Ah! you're clearly true soldiers—that means hired assassins, unknown to the world before Farnozas. Away, senseless butchers, and blessed be the plague that will avenge me on you!

THE DECURION

It's my turn. . . . Let me strike her with my arrows.

THE MOTHER

I'm dying! . . . but suffering no more. . . . Oh! how death is sweet. . . . Soldier, thanks . . . forgive! . . .

THE DECURION

All are corpses here. Soldiers, put away your arrows.

SUICIDE (Continued)

The seas, the islands, the forests, all inaccessible retreats were visited with care by the people bent upon the destruction of the human species. Some fugitives had employed ingenious means in attempting to escape death; but none succeeded except the one who is venerated today as the savior and father of the modern Starian race.

Ramzuel was his name; a stranger to the disturbances of the world, many years before he had left the country of the Tréliors, his homeland, and had retired to the center of the island of Infressia in order to pursue, in the quiet of meditation, physical experiments on the gravitation of bodies, since he had caught a glimpse of the possibility of counterbalancing its action without destroying the force which aggregated molecules. His discovery, although complete, still had to be simplified for purposes of application, when Cosmaël and his two friends arrived there.

Cosmaël had been Ramzuel's teacher and inspirer. When he knew of his student's discovery, he conceived the project of using it for his preservation and that of future humanity, for saving the reproductive germ of the human race. Ramzuel, aided by the vast knowledge of the Nemsède, soon perceived the means of eluding the barbarity of the murderers. After some research, they ended their efforts with the construction of two machines, which we will call by the name they were to have later: they were *abares*. These machines of vast dimensions were ovoid in shape and sheathed in a metallic plating pierced only at certain points by little windows covered with pieces of the same metal. It was that metallic sheathing completely enveloping the abares upon which was exercised the physical force forming the foundation of Ramzuel's discovery. This force suspended the effect of gravity for the bodies enveloped by it, or even imparted to the

abares a tendency to work more or less in the opposite direction to terrestrial attraction.

Ramzuel fitted the first abare with a reservoir of oxygenated air,[4] provisioned it with everything necessary to life, and had the three Nemsèdes, Cosmaël, Séelevelt, and Mundaltor, and his family, composed of his four children, his wife Corrilis, and her sister Essula, embark. The second, somewhat smaller, abare was attached to the first by a metal cable. It had been filled with precious books and instruments through the care of the three Nemsèdes; it was to be sacrificed in case of danger to the first.

Cosmaël and Ramzuel had occasion to make trial of their machines when Farnozas, with his legions, landed on the island of Infressia. They hovered in space at a height which rendered them invisible to the army of suicide, and, for the first time outwitting the frenzy of the Farnozians, set themselves down on the glaciers of the land of Bazoumrée toward the south pole of Star.

Meanwhile, Farnozas had resolved to put an end to all; and, after assuring himself that there remained only a small number of able-bodied men in the world, he chose and designated to all the place and hour of the great suicide. That place way Cape Abyss, an immense promontory facing the northern ocean of the eastern continent, at the foot of which the sea water came breaking and swirling with force to sweep away and pulverize objects caught in the whirlpool by the currents of the sea.

From every part of the world, the disciples of Farnozas drove before them old men, women, children, and the sick, directing them, as in a vast battue, toward the fatal promontory. The hunt lasted three years more, and during that time Farnozas, uncertain whether he would really bring death to the last man and constantly living in fear that someone might escape him, sought every means of assuring the complete annihilation of the species.

The ravages of the slow plague were little felt among the repleus; nevertheless, the individuals of that cowardly race remained filled with terror at the suffering they saw among their masters. Farnozas suggested the thought and tried to persuade them that never would that frightful

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[4]Eventually, instead of a reservoir of air, navigators furnished their abares with solid chemicals the combination of which could produce air, and each day they would prepare the provision of air for the vessel as they would prepare the provision of food.

evil cease as long as there was a human on earth to feed the epidemic. He well knew that fear would make them cruel and he further realized that, seeing themselves become the dominant species of the earth, they would enter into his purposes in killing all those who might escape him. He was not mistaken, for while he conducted the humans to the funeral spot, the repleus in the rear murdered the victims who succeeded in breaking through the lines of the army of future suicides. Not even some rare Longevouses who traveled alone escaped their homicidal daggers.

At last, the human masses found themselves assembled at Cape Abyss. Ramzuel, adjusting the centrifugal force of his machines, followed them and from high in the air witnessed the preparations of the immense holocaust. On the appointed day, Farnozas' sectarians, harangued for one last time by their chief, after having successively vociferated formidable curses against the earth, the sea, and the heavens, pushed the old men, women, and children into the gulf with fury, and, in their turn, to the last man hurled themselves from the height of the promontory's cliffs. Ramzuel, overwhelmed with sorrow, soared up to the highest heavens, seeking another world for humanity, dispossessed of the earth!

INTERMISSION

DOMINION OF THE REPLEUS

At the time Farnozas was hunting the humans recalcitrant toward suicide, he hesitated a moment, it is said, not knowing whether he should include the cétracites in the great murder of humanity; but, reflecting that the race, incapable of reproducing, would soon become extinct of itself, he sought rather to make them auxiliaries. To that effect, he organized regiments composed only of the half-breeds and made them the rear guard of his army, with the mission of killing the humans who might succeed in breaking through the first lines.

Command of the cétracite soldiers was given to one of them named Portamoüt, who had already distinguished himself for his courage and ferocity. The universal suicide having been accomplished at Cape Abyss, Portamoüt, respected by his soldiers and already at the head of an imposing legion far superior in strength and cleverness to the masses of repleus, needed little effort to establish his power over the species which from that moment had become dominant on earth. By means of disciplined cétracites, he trained troops of repleus in arms; almost all of the repleus were found to have a taste for military practices and discipline. Also, they were soon transformed into braggarts, haughty and vain to carry instruments which, for the first time, made them formidable.

Portamoüt divided his new army into several detachments, which he sent to search every corner of the world to discover whether any humans had escaped the massacre. It was found, in fact, that, sequestered on islands previously uninhabited and in the heights of lofty mountains, a few families had been able to escape. The repleus

completed the work of Farnozas; and humanity disappeared entirely from the earth.

In destroying mankind, Farnozas had respected their work: cities, palaces, monuments, riches—all had remained in existence. How was all this seized, divided, shared by the repleus? There was an inordinate gorging in which, more than once, blood flowed around the spoils. The cétracites, the strongest and best disciplined, made themselves rich and powerful above all. The alloy of their blood with that of mankind distinguished them enough for themselves; but, despising the unclean species they dominated, they decided to elevate their parents and other relatives by creating from that exclusively repleu blood a nobility which, shortly thereafter, was made hereditary. Moreover, since the morals of the repleus could not be farther from irreproachable, it was agreed that inheritance among the nobility would be transmitted through the females, because it was certain that the children born of them would be of at least half noble blood. Nobility had been unknown to mankind. The stupid and vain idea of establishing such distinctions had never sprung up in a human head. But, quite naturally, it was bound to be in accord with the pride of a repleu. Moreover, from top to bottom, there were none among them but scalawags and scum; and there was not a filthy and vile repleu who did not regard with the height of disdain another individual of his race yet more abject than he.

Mankind, having domesticated the repleus, had found in them servants of passive submission and often cunning baseness. Yet, if the humans could complain of the gluttonous, cowardly, and licentious character of the second beings of creation, they consoled themselves in seeing that the repleus possessed the intellect and taste for servitude. Despite the quarrelsome spirit the repleus showed among themselves, there had never been any revolt or insubordination to fear; for the very foundation of repleu character was a pugnacious and boastful cowardice which only success or fear could render savage. When mankind was destroyed and had passed into the fossil state, the repleus, with this quarrelsome disposition, brought to their mutual relations an almost bellicose spirit, preserving, however, the instincts of obedience and servility. These faults made them a species fitted to a military state and discipline; likewise, in contrast to the

Starian humans, among whom the army was nothing, among the repleus the army was everything. Therefore, Portamoüt had little to do to regiment the bolder of the repleus, all the more as he conferred money, power, and honors on them. The new nobility declared themselves apt only for the profession of arms.

Closer to human reason than the ignorant masses of repleus, Portamoüt, who wanted to be a lawgiver also, did not consider his power sufficiently strong with an instinctively and brutally obedient army: he also wanted to weigh down the people with the tyranny of religious superstition. His father, a poor miner from the country of the Savelces, had been one of the last of the rare sectarians of Oxyure. He had raised Portamoüt in that religion and the latter, accustomed to the dogmas and ceremonies of the cult, did not give himself the trouble of learning a new one. Temples and altars were in existence, according to the country, to Ruliel, to Starilla, and to Panéther. Repleus transformed into priests of Oxyure took possession of them and there unfolded the series of their hideous liturgical masquerades. It is even reported that these new priests assembled a council in which the repleus acknowledged themselves henceforth to have immortal souls and claimed a future paradise of pleasures reserved chiefly for warriors and members of the clergy.

It is said that Portamoüt, seeing the prideful yet base instincts of the species he governed and comparing it to the majesty and frankness of the human race, before he died repented having been one of the instruments of the destruction of humanity on earth. He regretted, it is said, that that admirable sphere, that splendid nature, had for spectators only beings who were degraded and incapable of feeling its charms and its poetry.

Portamoüt married a repleu named Oussanru. Since he could not have children, it was his half-brother on his mother's side, the repleu Cassupif, who succeeded him. Cassupif married the empress, Oussanru, by whom he had several children. Cassupif was an idiotic and feeble repleu. The army chiefs and nobles, seeing the mental deficiency of the new emperor, were at variance to seize power and heaped up massacres upon conflagrations and pillage upon rape. The empress, Oussanru, having succeeded in assembling a certain party of troops, sent as a present to

the armies in insurrection—as if she had wanted to appease them—a considerable quantity of brandy and other strong drinks. The soldiers foolishly steeped themselves in the alcohol. For some days, there was nothing in the camps but orgy, drunkenness, and brutalization. Meanwhile, Oussanru, knowing them drunk and incapable of fighting, had her small, faithful band march against those inert masses. There was dreadful butchery, and peace was reestablished.

Already the great majority of the cétracites had died, and as a generation of repleus had passed away since humanity's suicide, those beings, of greater stature and intelligence than the repleus, were venerated and contemplated with superstitious terror. Soon, the astonishment which the old cétracites inspired in the people gave way to a sort of cult. They were of a superior nature; the repleus quickly made them demigods. The last to survive was the cétracite Corlaop. He was actually deified, and had temples while he lived—neither more nor less than Oxyure. It is believed, moreover, that the deceit of the repleu priests strongly contributed to bringing about that result. Here, in a few words, is the history of the god Corlaop:

The cétracite, who had attained an advanced age, after having successively survived several females, at the age of eighty married a repleu named Rédidou. She, at the end of one year, brought into the world a child of repleu blood. Corlaop, who could not remember that any cétracite had ever had offspring, wanted to kill the repleu and her son, when the high priest of Oxyure, who was a relative and probably the seducer of Rédidou, had the event interpreted as a divine miracle. Corlaop consoled himself for his misadventure by becoming a god in a splendid temple previously consecrated to Ruliel.

Inheritance being transmitted through the female, Cassupif was succeeded by his sister's son, named Bénoraou. That repleu lord was certainly the most capricious and whimsical emperor of his species. Having heard that humans had been stronger and more beautiful than repleus because they had had flat ears and white, smooth skin, he wanted all his subjects to have their ears shortened and the hair removed from their skin. This was the occasion of grimaces and gnashing of teeth among the repleu brood; but Bénoraou insisted, and the repleus, soon

without ears and without hair, from being ugly, as they were, became shockingly hideous. In the end, Bénoraou could not help recognizing this. Then, he directed everyone, on pain of death, to dye themselves scarlet from head to foot, and he himself gave example. This metamorphosis rather pleased the repleus, in which the population, thus rutilant, had become unrecognizable—the mask favored pillage and debauchery. Soon, dissatisfied with the color red, Bénoraou had his people dyed successively blue, green, etc., making his docile nation change, from one moment to another, from white to black.

His successor, named Corrip, a great believer in etiquette, preserved the custom of having his subjects dyed, but he assigned a color and shade to each class and rank. He had reserved white for himself, his family, and his high nobility. Then, all classes aligned themselves by colors and shades; at the end came the *plebs,* who for their distinctive color had light gray. Unfortunately, it was always happening that the gluttonous and dirty habits of high dignitaries shortly sullied the whiteness of their bodies; this, with the filthiness of their dress, caused them to be confused with the repleus besmeared with gray at the bottom of the social ladder.

While the emperor Corrip was spending his time debating the forms and usages of aulic etiquette with his ministers, the empire was being dismembered, and several army commanders established independent kingdoms for themselves. After Corrip, we see, then, the lands of Star divided into states or kingdoms of repleus—states plundering and ruining one another, conquering each other in turn—also, the minds of the repleus were constantly becoming more brutalized and savage.

The situation that prevailed in the international warfare of the repleus, as in their domestic differences, was the disorder and evil occasioned by panics which rather frequently happened in connection with an absurd rumor, and which routed entire armies, whether victorious or vanquished, or else which, in the twinkling of an eye and without motive, set individuals of the same people to quarreling and murdering one another out of fear. Under these circumstances, every unhinged and trembling individual would pitilessly slay any repleu flesh that fell into his hands. At every moment, it would happen that the soldiers of one army or the inhabitants of the same city,

seized by some ridiculous fear, would come to blows and exterminate each other with frenzy up to the point when, fear having become at last more intense than madness, all would begin to flee in every direction. These ferocious fears were explained in part by the extreme cowardice which forms the foundation of the repleu character. All governments attempted to make laws against fear without succeeding in moderating its excesses. In all the countries of the world, every individual, whoever he might be, convicted of having divulged his terrors to his neighbor was condemned to die immediately at the stake. That law, which forced the repleus to disguise their cowardice, contributed not a little to exaggerating in them the boastful and bullying character that they have retained today.

Among the five or six kingdoms that then divided the inhabited lands, that which was most important in the world was that of Polymanie, for the reason that its people were permitted the most extravagances. We will hastily recount the principal events of its history, because familiarity with them is of concern to a clear understanding of events which follow.

After a political tumult in which certain individuals, who showed themselves to be almost human, wanted to make trial of an unconfined, independent government, despotism and war reappeared, bringing in their wake a pugnacious mob of those vain and bloody repleus called heroes, which the species always acclaimed, probably because they were the butchers of their stupid flocks.

The state of Polymanie had to suffer misery, anguish, and desolation for the glory which the martial chiefs of their senseless, bewildered hordes always won for themselves. Among the repleu lords who successively occupied the throne of Polymanie, Coscolo, Rontalouf, and Tortipu are cited. They were the most celebrated among the kings of nations for the reason that they had more repleus killed than any conquering despot had yet put to death and because they committed perhaps the greatest crime of *lèse-repleusité* which had been perpetrated since the beginning of the species' domination.

The Polymanians made war on all their neighbors at once—on the Ursusottins, on the Gibbogrimes, etc. These, on their part, in waging war on the Polymanians, did not fight one another less, and it even happened that

the repleus of one nation would fight among themselves and with all other peoples at the same time. Yet the species was slack and chickenhearted; but perhaps the apparent contradiction is sufficiently explained if one reflects that they were disciplined cowards, servilely obeying vain cowards.

Surely, the repleu species would have had to multiply beyond measure to provide for the waste of repleu flesh being made by the heroes who, unquestionably, hardly asked the price. What was singular was that the more Coscolo, Rontalouf, Tortipu, and others had their repleus slaughtered, the more those whom they had exposed and whom they had to expose to death were fascinated and brutalized by discipline to admire their bloody extravagances. After a period of more than half a century, a true savage debauch and a veritable political jumble, the repleu world, depopulated, disgusted, and exhausted rather than surfeited and chastened, found itself one fine day enjoying an approximate peace.

At that time, one named Pansouillu is thought to have been the king of Polymanie. Pansouillu, not wanting to make war, ate a great deal, slept well, and did not want to do anything else. Then, after him, came other kings who themselves wanted to do something; but what could the mind of a repleu king want if not to vex and torture his stupid nation a bit? Some of those princes employed all the energy of their subjects in building mausoleums; and this is cited to show to what point their pride could go.

When the repleus were not making war, they were sure to be wrangling among themselves. Now, during the reign of one of the last Polymanian kings, named Cafou, a schism occurred among the priests of the great Oxyure, some of whom wanted to locate their paradise of future pleasures in the sky, while the others wanted to locate it under the ground. Cafou himself had a pretension truly worthy of a repleu: that it was not too much for a king like himself to enter paradise body and soul. That was why, having at first embraced the belief of those who placed paradise in space, he had his people build a tower whose pinnacle could touch the sky, so that, after his death, his tomb could be perched there. Later, however, having been brought over to the doctrine of the priests who maintained that the happy abode of the great Oxyure

was underground, Cafou had the tower torn down and excavated in its place a shaft of incalculable depth, destined to engulf his mortal remains.

Moreover, if the Polymanians with their stupidities inspired the admiration of the Ursusottins, the Gibbogrimes, and other idiotic peoples, it must be said that these latter did everything possible to resemble the Polymanians and that all demonstrated in their behavior an almost equal insanity. Later, we shall see what events came to overthrow in an instant the political and social structures of those diverse kingdoms.

BOOK III

SATELLITES

Chapter 1

TASSUL

I.

A strong, ascensional and slow stream
Took Ramzuel toward the sky's abysm.

II.

Once extricated from the vapors of the atmosphere, the abares, which carried the last of the Nemsèdes and the only scions of the human race, in their ascension took on a previously unknown speed. They rose and rose, withdrawing with the speed of a bomb pointed toward the zenith. Soon they reached regions distant enough from Star that the planet, with an already phosphorescent aspect, appeared to the ethereal travelers to embrace the lower part of the sky. Still they rose, and the phosphorescence became a true lunar light; they rose, and the earth in its part of the sky was nothing more than an immense disk which startled the eye with its enormous mass. They withdrew farther; but, at last, full of uncertainty and great distress, they stopped a moment in space.

At that very moment, in looking around them, Ramzuel and the Nemsèdes were struck with terror at the dismal silence of the heavens and the incommensurable solitude full of light and emptiness. Toward what place would

they steer? In the bosom of what earth would they find shelter? The stars were still so remote. . . .

It was then that the fresh and smiling face of Tassul came into view. After a moment's reflection, they decided to direct their course toward that satellite, which is closest to Star in space. Despite the infinite force of progression the abares possessed, for a long time they went astray in their pursuit of Tassul, which sped before them in its rotation around Star.

Discouraged, Ramzuel then stopped, daring neither to return in his course nor to advance farther in the seas of emptiness. That was why, by means of a special maneuver which had for its purpose the balancing of centrifugal and centripetal forces for the abares, he had them maintain, at that point in space, a true and absolute immobility. The Starians, despondent and anxious, looked around them at the scattered disks in the sky, craving and coveting a world, an earth—less than that, the wreck of a planet or an asteroid where they could rest an instant.

III.

Rushing forward come a thousand clustered suns;
Turning stars fall away in their revolutions;
And all, rapid and fierce,
Surprisedly contemplate with their fiery eyes
Ramzuel immobile, hanging in space
And letting the entire universe pass;
Only the Starian abare stops like an atom
In the heavenly firmament—seized by the vacuum.

IV.

The human race dethroned from the planet Star
Believed they were condemned to die in the ether . . .
Silence and solitude . . . and nothing there
But the incommensurable and infinite sphere!
In undulations of cold light, the last
Of the Starians, for their place of final rest
Would have the empyrean, void and eternal.
Humankind would end there!
Yet Ramzuel

Perceived, rising from their horizon's lower sill,
A shimmering moon.
O success! intoxication!
The planet advanced, coming in their direction. . . .
Soon, as reason called upon calculation,
In that redeeming world they knew the Tassulian
Orb, which, for them, ended its circular path
And came to offer its hospitable earth.

V.

Indeed, that satellite after which they had run had an impossible speed; but, having achieved its revolution around Star, it returned to overtake the Starians at the point in space where they had stopped, hopeless of reaching it. Ramzuel guided the abares into the line along which Tassul was to pass, and he soon found himself at the extreme limits of the atmosphere of that welcome earth. Once within the air surrounding the satellite, he maneuvered so as to travel for some time over its surface, and chose to disembark on an isolated beach; but it was at the summit of a mountain that the Starians came to earth.

At last they had found another homeland: but alas! their hearts, gladdened by hope, immediately contracted as they let their eyes wander over those strange lands. At the surface of the ground, the physiognomy of Tassul had its beauties, but its looks were quite different from the looks of the earth where they had been born; these were no longer the objects that their eyes were accustomed to seeing; they were indeed exiled in a new world.

In descending the height where they had effected their landing, they found plains where the vegetation, compared to that of Star, seemed a little stunted. The color of the fields and of the woods covered with leaves was rather uniformly whitish, or shaded off from white to gray, as if, in a Starian landscape, the countryside had been covered with frost. Nevertheless, over that white and ash-colored life, brightly colored fruits and flowers gleamed as a red, yellow, and blue stippling.

Then, what especially struck the Starians with surprise and admiration was the multitude of birds displaying colors similar to those of the flowers; in scattered and

innumerable flocks, they appeared hanging in clusters amid the white foliage or flying about pell-mell among the flowers and fruits. The singing, varicolored bands gave the most fantastic animation to the plains of that earth, where you could not take a step without seeing spring up before you, like thousands of sparks, pretty golden, violet, red, or green birds flashing through the sky or agitating the foliage while sending forth harmonious songs. If the number of birds seemed prodigious to the Starians, that of other animals seemed to them considerably diminished; for they saw, here and there, only a few rare individuals.

After a first glance of inspection of the hospitable globe, the group from Star instinctively lifted their eyes toward the *earth*, the object of regrets and love. At that moment and from the place they were observing, the horizon of Tassul, the first satellite of Star, was filled in part by the great planet which, like an enormous moon, embraced a considerable area.

VI.

Then its immense, pale globe over them
Extended in the sky its potent corona
And there set a scintillating pattern
For its vast cupola.
All the fires of the suns scattered in the sky,
Reflecting on that disk, tracking their prints
In a capricious way,
There caused to be mirrored shadows, rays, and tints.
At the magnificence of that orb of radiance,
With the warmest reflections and the colors of Iris,
The eye might have thought it saw the artist's palette
Of the angel who, landscapist of the heavenly vault,
Painted the infinite worlds
On the frescoes of paradise.

VII.

Besides the three Nemsèdes, the Starian family was composed, as we said, of Ramzuel, his four children, his

wife, Corrilis, and her sister, named Essula. This group of travelers, after having lodged the abares in a safe place, advanced cautiously in search of some trace of the passage of humanity on that globe. Their search did not last long; for, after some hours of walking, they discovered in the distance the buildings of a city on the shores of a lake. They approached it shivering with uneasiness.

The first Tassulians who saw them were extraordinarily surprised at the strangeness of their appearance and had all the people gather around them. Ramzuel and Mundaltor, by means of an expressive and suppliant pantomime, told of their misfortunes as they pointed to the cradle of their birth. The differences of physical structure which distinguished them greatly from the people of Tassul made their adventures easy to believe. Kind and hospitable, the Tassulians helped them immediately and later gave them lands on a fertile, though almost uninhabited continent. The continent was located on the side of the globe which perpetually faced the Starian earth in gravitating around it. There it was that Ramzuel established his family in hopes of beginning the regeneration of the Starian race.

Essula, Corrilis' sister, had been destined to live in celibacy; but Séelevelt the Longevous had made Ramzuel's wife understand the loss that the sterility of her sister would cause her family, which needed to produce in order to reestablish the Starian blood, the sources of which threatened to dry up. Corrilis herself went to ask Ramzuel to take Essula as a second wife. That was why the number of Ramzuel's children became very large.

VIII.

Let us now speak of the human race of Tassul with whom the Starians came to live. Ramzuel and his friends the Longevouses, ignorant of the language and customs of those people, for some time believed that the women were carefully guarded in the interiors of the dwellings or that custom made it a rule for them not to show themselves in public. Their surprise was great, however, when they discovered that the individuals with whom they maintained relations had no wives, but that they themselves

comprised the two sexes, in a word, that they were hermaphrodites. The Tassulians, endowed with organs proper to man and woman, for the needs of procreation did not even require a union with another individual of their species; alone, and by their own faculties, they were able to beget and to give birth. Their costume was uniformly a sort of toga amply draped over their shoulders. The Tassulians, for the most part robust and tall, did not know luxury and practiced the most absolute social equality.

If the love of the sexes was something unknown and impossible to those people, it is said that they found within themselves very ardent sources of natural happiness. Who can comprehend, moreover, the joys of a solitary love, of a love of self, a love always faithful, without jealousy, without regrets? However, the most absolute sentiment, the most constant passion of Tassulian character is incontestably the passion of parenthood. Parental love is the life and joy of that race. How could it be otherwise? Free from the cares of conjugal love, all the desires of their hearts are poured out upon their children. Never, as among human males, does a gnawing doubt come to trouble their parental quietude. Besides, their children are engendered of their blood; each child is of the flesh of one alone; each is maintained in one's bowels and never was carried and nursed by a wife become indifferent or hateful. Among a human race provided with two sexes, the child, completely the woman's, is linked to its father only by an extremely fragile bond, which doubt sometimes breaks in his eyes as in the eyes of the world. How many fathers, having a profound and necessary desire for paternity, have regretted not being, like women, more completely participants in the procreation of an individual of their blood?

Great, very great is the solicitude of the Tassulian for his children, and that solicitude is only equaled by the respect and affection of the children for the unique author of their days. The family, based on parental love and filial devotion, is strongly established among the Tassulians. Since marriage could not exist, children never leave their parent to follow a stranger, and the progenitor dies surrounded by offspring whose loving thoughts follow him even beyond the tomb.

In that society, woe to the sterile, condemned to pass

a life of solitude without hope of satisfying their need of loving. Thus, almost all the Tassulians to whom nature has refused the gift of parenthood early resort to suicide. A peculiarity of the physical structure of that race furnishes them with an extremely easy means of doing so. The heart of a Tassulian is under the influence of the will, and a vigorous effort of that will can stop the heartbeat: the will to die suffices to kill.

The numerous species of birds found on Tassul are almost all endowed with two sexes. The mammalian animals, for the most part hermaphrodites, are only found in small numbers. The most common animal on the globe is a sort of reptile called a *ball*, which, as its name indicates, has the form of a ball of white and livid flesh, without the appearance of members or external appendages. This reptile, which lives on dry grass and which walks, or rather rolls itself along the ground by means of muscular contractions in its hide, long prompted the disgust of the Starians, who could not without dread see that fleshy mass, as big as a man's head, with its mouth slit surmounted by two holes at the bottom of which burned two always fixed eyes, without movement and without eyelids.

IX.

In the fine and frosted grass which carpets those fields,
Gathers the tribe of the sons of Ramzuel.
The father is with them: he is bent, being aged,
And, trembling, he leans on the arm of Cosmaël.
The children are arrayed around the abare
Which once had saved their parents from extinction.
Ramzuel prepares himself for death, which is near;
All have received his kiss of paternal affection.
He mounts the abare, there again taking his place,
And he pronounces these phrases solemnly:
"I wished the abare in which I have conquered space
"Be my last shelter, my tomb in the boundless sky;
"But before he vanishes into the void,
"Your father gives to all here the immortal edict:
"Human beings, remember well my last words;
"May always and everywhere this sacred precept
"From father to son be repeated through the ages,

"The great rule, the eternal testament
"Given his children by the first of sages:

X.

"Respect my blood!"

XI.

All were still listening, when Ramzuel already
Was furrowing the fields of the infinite:
The Starians' eyes wished to fix his route;
But the abare rolled at random ascensionally. . . .
The last seeing it in the hazy atmosphere
Through blued ether soaring into the depths of the air,
Said the abare, wandering in the sky,
At last, went to lose itself in Ruliel's eye.

XII.

At Ramzuel's death, his children and grandchildren already numbered some hundreds. Arts and letters had been preserved in flourishing state, thanks to the three Nemsèdes, who, guardians of all knowledge, had been the teachers of Ramzuel's children, and had distributed the professions according to individual aptitudes.

Under a fraternal government, the Starians lived for a period of four centuries, multiplying to such an extent that their number soon exceeded that of the human race of Tassul. Although vaguely troubled by the tradition of a lost earth, the Starians became accustomed to regarding as the fixed and inalienable homeland of their species that other earth of Tassul, with its dwarfed vegetation and its grayish life-forms, scarcely enlivened by its multitudes of precious birds. They considered as the only view, as the one field given to their vision, the view of a sky forever occupied by an immense moon, which gave them light by reflecting a phantasmagorical but pale and lusterless light.

Some years more passed; but, at the end of that time,

it became obvious that the Tassulians and Starians, having spread over every corner of that sickly world, were going to suffocate on a too-limited globe incapable of nourishing their whole population.

On the part of the Starians, a council of those elected by the people was convoked: there, Cosmaël, Séelevelt, and Mundaltor calmed the Starians' desperate anguish by showing them large-model abares which they had just had finished; the Nemsèdes promised them, instead of the Starian earth where they did not dare to venture, another world where the surplus population could emigrate. Therefore, it was decided that a flotilla of abares, under the command of Cosmaël, would, at an opportune moment, go to Lessur, the satellite of Star located immediately beyond Tassul.

After a crossing during which several abares were forced to fall back toward Tassul, three abares, each commanded by one of the Longevouses, landed one hundred and fifty Starians on Lessur. Before entering upon a description of that satellite, let us say at once that the first exploration of the globe, twice the size of Tassul, sufficed to decide the Starians to establish settlements there, and that, on the advice they had been given, several hundred Starian families went there successively.

Chapter 2

LESSUR

I.

When the ethereal navigators, guided by Cosmaël, arrived on Lessur, their astonishment was at its height. They left the ether's void, with its depths of transparent black, and began to float in the atmosphere enveloping Lessur. They hastened to let into the abares' interiors that new, pure air in order to breathe with full lungs. Immediately, their sense of smell was delightfully affected by a wonderful, mellow fragrance. They came to earth enraptured and only became accustomed to those scents little by little—in order to more voluptuously inhale the nuances, different according to the breezes moving the waves of perfumed air. On Lessur, the north and west winds have different fragrances; but nothing equals the sensations of sweet bliss sometimes sent by the enchanting and caressing perfumes of the breezes of evening or of the incomplete twilight of those lands. Those breezes almost always provoke a placid intoxication and invite sleep full of delightful quietude.

That fragrant atmosphere, that air covering the surface of Lessur, instead of coloring the sky blue as on Star or Tassul, tints its transparent depths a golden yellow, and its limpidity is only rarely tainted by clouds of silvery white. Imagine, under that cordial sky, an earth perpetually adorned with verdure, with vegetation often bluish, but also, more often, hidden under innumerable fragrant flowers, all of brilliant colors, exhaling perfumes of differing essences. These flowers, small in the grass, are enormously large in the trees. If Tassul was the country of birds, Lessur, in the Starians' eyes, was that

of flowers and, above all, the enchanting land of soft perfumes. In crossing the golden sky, the suns have a warmer and more intense brightness. Star, farther from this satellite, no longer overhangs half the sky with its circular mass, as on Tassul; but its still mighty disk sternly recalled to the Starians traditional memories of the motherland.

Let us advance amid this verdure and these flowers lit by this golden sky and breathe the air, varied slightly with perfumes according to the wind's direction. Let us go forward, for we want to meet the satellite's human race, and we are beginning to catch sight of Lessurian people seated in the country's flowery shade.

II.

All grace and fire, the people of Lessur
Appeared to the Starians as emblems most pure
Of form expressing the life of the intellect,
Of sprightly and thinking flesh moved by spirit.
Life and thought, in that magnificent land,
On each, growing handsomer, carved the traits of a god.
An angelic race, all but immaterial!
Their pale, rose forms are expressive and beautiful:
Like a sunbeam, their coloring throws out a splash
Of mellow light infusing their rosy flesh;
Their clear, vermilion blood flows vibrating
Under the skin, rushing and sparkling.
But, especially, there brightly shone in each eye
A spiritual flame such that it could defy
A Starian gaze to stare into its power.

Our amazed travelers remained at a distance there.
They approached. . . . Already those splendid folk
Had seen the Starians, and, advancing, spoke. . . .
From their lips came a sympathetic harmony,
A language in which verse and melody
At every moment inspired improvised songs,
Translating all thought into harmonized poems.
In public discourse each clear and vibrant voice
Did not desire to use inelegant prose,
Only reserved for children, although in private

C. Barr

Spoken verse they scarcely would accept.
An admirable symbol of that artistic race,
It is the orator who bestows on his phrase
The large and prompt talent of a great composer,
The spirit of a poet and voice of a singer—
Who, in a rhythmic chant, with the subject's nuance,
Improvised both melody and cadence.

The Starians listened, moved by their recitals,
And followed, thrilled, those proud and gentle
mortals,
Curious to sound their extra-human customs.

In the heart of a prairie, where pure fountains
Diffused the mildest freshness all around them,
A grove of green trees suspended a vault of blooms.
Beneath them, the earth, like a carpet, was adorned.
In daylight, among shaped flowers under that arcade,
A multitude of women would sing and dance.
Lessurian souls, those alabaster sylphs,
Whose flesh might have been formed of softened
pearls,
Were seen to rise on sure and vigorous limbs,
Floating fragile, suspending themselves. As they were
Wafting thus, their voices sent through the air
Songs going to the heart, whose modulation
In gentle thrills conveyed an intoxication.

III.

The Starians were extremely delighted. Conducted to the hearts of cities, they then began to instruct themselves in the mysteries of the life of the people. The first of these mysteries, which took some time to fathom, resided in the organic conditions that forbade an impure union of the sexes. Procreation and the sensual pleasures which accompany it require a sympathetic magnetism combining the vital forces in an equal embrace, in an equal love. Otherwise, the production of children takes place as with the Starians.

These physiological circumstances necessarily lead to the spiritualization of the passion of the sexes; but that passion, in order to fulfill itself, requires a perfectly sym-

pathetic individual of the other sex. From the age of puberty, each man begins to search for the woman whose vital fluid, whose lively force of sentiment, can enter into combination with the aspirations and needs of his being. The search is long. Often, only one woman is organized sympathetically with the man tormented by passion. Some are never able to find one; they become vagrant and melancholy. It is understood that with these conditions and these difficulties, marriages must be made, it is not necessary to say apart from ideas of beauty, since the Lessurians are all beautiful, but at least always apart from ideas of wealth.

On Lessur, nature is, moreover, full of sensual pleasure and sympathy. Under the golden skies, in the lands of enchantment, and in the perfumed air, sometimes there pass showers of a fluid of penetrating effects, with currents of a voluptuous magnetism with mysterious waves gladdening all living and sensitive flesh.

IV.

It's in the vernal days,
When a cool wind in the trees
With golden sieves comes to scatter like sweet grain
A luxurious spindrift
To the amorous disposition;
When the flowers, not long ago closed tight,
Grandly spread out the brilliance of their attire;
When the four suns, facing each other in the skies,
Send their fires to cross from every ninety degrees
To the shores of Lessur, at times, over the land
Pass luminous eddies—
An unknown fluid flows level with the ground.
Those mild, electric pressures
Bring intense ravishments and sweet embraces
To all the transported human creatures;
It shocks, above all, shoot forth to them the touches
Of new, celestial pleasures.
Then, that entire world thrills to the measure
Of every jet impelled by a sensual stream;
And, then, all sensate things feel their nerves shudder
To the transports of a universal spasm.

V.

Here it would be impossible to give even an incomplete idea of the perfection of the arts, and particularly of the visual arts of color and form. On Lessur, painting was practiced with a taste such that the Starians who had excelled at it—such as Mundaltor the Nemsède, who had cultivated it in the course of a long existence—could not get their fill of contemplating the Lessurians' pictorial wonders. The marvels of Lessurian architecture, however, seemed to them still more to merit admiration and wonder.

Beyond the beauty and elegance attributed to each monument in particular, the Lessurians arranged all the buildings in such a way as to give their palaces and cities, seen from a certain point of view, a fascinating appearance making a bizarre or grandiose picture always full of majesty and originality. For this purpose, they generally constructed their towns in the shapes of amphitheaters on the sides of hills or on other sites picturesquely disposed; and there, with monuments, aqueducts, artificial streams, and artfully placed trees they laid out a landscape, a striking and fantastic picture.

VI.

The Starians, charmed by the beauties of the planet, asked for and obtained authorization to establish colonies to people several regions of that world. Lessur, having twice the extent of the satellite Tassul, was proportionately less populated; for the Lessurians, with their aesthetic natures, were not very prolific. When they returned to Tassul, the travelers' report caused flotillas of abares to be chartered and to bring to Lessur the surplus of the Starian species on Tassul. Those multiplied in their turn under that fortunate sky. Relations were always maintained between the two globes by means of abares, and the race of Ramzuel grew and prospered amid vicissitudes of less importance.

It was not until after two centuries that the Starians of Lessur framed the project of adventuring once more into

unknown space, hoping to find on a new globe other marvels as food for their curiosity. That was why a squadron manned by five hundred Starians from Lessur ascended the sky and went to land on Rudar, the third satellite of the Starian planet.

Chapter 3

RUDAR

I.

When in proximity to Rudar, the desires of the Starians, who had hoped to find on that globe beauties equal to those of Lessur or at least of Tassul, were unfortunately disappointed. Descending onto that world, the abares plunged into an obscure atmosphere where the Starians soon lost sight of the stars. The air surrounding that globe was constituted of a sort of fuliginous fog, a gray mist without transparency and only translucent to the light of day.

The Starians, leaving the abares, thought they would suffocate breathing that impure air; thus, it was only after some hours that they could accustom themselves to it. The hearts of our travelers were oppressed when they examined, in the obscurity of that sky, the earth under their feet. There were neither rivers nor seas, but only a soil strewn with muddy lakes and swamps. In the sky was an eternal mist and never, never either blue or displaying suns or twinkling stars.

Nevertheless, the vigorous vegetation everywhere spread out its leaves and branches of lusterless black—a uniform color, though sometimes shading into brown or into tints of saffron. At times, also, that nature adorned itself with whitish flowers or, in the wintry seasons, was seen sadly powdered with snow.

II.

In the air, a blackish cloud
Draws its stubborn blind
Between the unkind, harsh ground
And the ever unknown heavens.
From the opaque mud, the waters
Everywhere sink black pools
Or create blighted mires
Full of white and ashen demons.

No tree here does not trim
Its rugged trunk with a comb;
From the branches, the sharp rim
Extends its common slant.
Harsh nature without soft shades!
Great lichens, enormous molds
See their long shoots with black buds
Lost in the sky's constant night.

III.

The tradition preserved by the natives reported that in the earliest ages the sky was flashed through by suns, the air pure, the earth fertile, and brightly colored vegetation extended its branches and leaves. In the times that followed, said the Rudarians, the globe, disturbed by convulsions, shook on its foundations; the air became corrupt; the waters, dispersed over the earth's surface, covered it with swamps; and it was from that time that earth and sky, stars and vegetation became darkened.

IV.

Here is a description the Starian travelers left of the natives of Rudar:

These people, almost all tall, thin, and bony, are endowed with considerable muscular power, and all their flesh, as if withered, is made up of grayish fibers, com-

pact and strong. Their uniformly silvery skin gleams with a rather keen metallic brightness. Instead of hair, their heads are covered with narrow, long, and glossy scales, to which the movements of the cranial muscles impart a sound similar to that made by rattlesnakes. Their emerald-green eyes have fiery yellow pupils and send forth a singular phosphorescence. Moreover, their character is sad and taciturn and their lives are an embittered and continual battle against a danger which nature has placed closer to them, perhaps, than to other human species. That danger is *death*.

V.

Already for all, death is the unknown, the doubt,
The dreaded silence, vast and cold, the long night:
Death leaves our bodies to rot in the sepulcher,
Yet carries our souls far, we know not where!

VI.

Well! this death, so cruelly real for all the races of mankind who succumb to it in the manner of the Starians, is indeed terrible after another manner for Rudar's inhabitants. Among the Rudarians, *death* is truly a living and visible being; the word refers to a species with the form and size of an elongated bladder, provided, all around its external envelope, with membranes or hanging lamellas which serve as wings. Those beings, which have nothing in common with the other beings of the world either in organization or in character, are for the human species and animal kingdom the devouring enemy and the grave of all life; for the only food capable of quickening and sustaining the existence of the deaths is the souls of humans and the vital forces of animals, which the deaths are able to draw in—to drain at a distance—by inflating their muscular hides. Nothing but immaterial souls or vital spirits can feed and sustain them. Some of the deaths roving through the foggy air of Rudar prefer for their food the souls of children and of young animals; others, the souls of women; and others, in contrast, the souls and

vital forces of men of great courage. Some imbibe the whole life at once; others, savoring the agony of their prey, first drain the victim's strength, then leave him beaten down for some time, soon returning to devour his intelligence, and finally keeping his soul for a last meal.

The Rudarians, with their constitutions of steel fibers, would have been immortal if the fiends of death had not decimated them at every moment. However, for the whole duration of their existence, the energetic disposition of the Rudarians is in perpetual struggle with the objects of their destruction. The deaths themselves cannot be killed except by the most scorching fire. That is why the Rudarians have invented weapons which, charged with a powerful fire, sometimes succeed in annihilating the makers of human funerals.

However indefatigable the Rudarians might show themselves in a war of this kind, the deaths would have long before entirely devoured the human race if the Rudarians, all multiparous, did not continually reproduce the deaths' food and make good the losses to humanity by an amazing fecundity.

VII.

And yet, at times, this world of night and venom
Has its celebrations. Thus, when black with brume,
In days of sultry fever
The air grows heavier with vapor
From the lakes; and when the night becomes more somber,
From the depths of those countless bogs, one watches stir
Hosts of will-o'-the-wisps,
Greens, reds, blues, and violets.
Then, suddenly there is a glittering!
The shifting trail of those colored fires, in dancing,
Frolics, leaps, and sports.
The fires pass and repass,
Everywhere intermingling their blazing shades
And covering with light those transformed lands.
It is said that in those short times,
When those tremulous flames
On that cloudy world create a fairyland,

Mankind, bruised by anguish, is found
Forgetting pain and struggle
To enjoy themselves in the revel.
By the glimmer of those fires, and in immense groups
The impassioned people run to join in their leaps.
Oh! it's festival, love and joy;
For during those hours of the day,
Interrupting the course of their funeral feasts,
The deaths, full of terror, search for darker mists.

VIII.

It is especially in the hearts of those dancing tourbillions and amid the intoxication of those festivities that are heard sung the praises and exploits of Ourbatram, the Rudarians' hero. Oh! he was a hero such that the other human races had never known. Elsewhere, those honored with that title picked it up in pools of human blood; but Ourbatram, all his life, fought only those masters with glutinous and mutiple wings which are the tombs of souls on Rudar. It is told that the birds of death, united in a legion to attack him and to attempt to devour his strength or suck out his life. Alone, Ourbatram fought against them a hundred days and a hundred nights; but, at the end of that time, vanquished by sleep, he collapsed on a heap of corpses of the monsters of death, and his vital force was immediately devoured by the famished deaths that survived their companions.

Rudarian legend claims that after the combats of Ourbatram mortality diminished among the Rudarians; death became more rare, until, the ominous monsters have multiplied again, the human species was again decimated, as it is today. But, alas! the lands of Rudar have no more warriors of the quality of Ourbatram!

IX.

The curiosity of the Starian travelers once satisfied, they were eager to return to the globes of Lessur and Tassul, abandoning the plan they had conceived before their voyage of founding colonies on Rudar. Nevertheless, the re-

ports they made to their compatriots about the unusual features of those lands decided several of the latter to cross space to explore such a strange nature; and even today, Rudar receives each year the visits of a great number of foreigners from other globes.

Moreover, the arrival and contact of the Starians gave to the gloomy peoples of Rudar an invaluable benefit in teaching them the art of constructing abares. However, they could not, like the Starian race, escape by that means their livid and unwholesome planet; for almost all of them, once departed from their fogs, wasted away and died. The etheric machines did permit them sometimes to rise to the superior limits of Rudar's atmosphere, and there was not one among them who was not permitted that ascension—to be able, at least once in his life, to enjoy the sight of the stars in the constellated sky.

Chapter 4

ÉLIER

I.

The discovery of, or rather, the voyage to Élier was a bold endeavor before which the audacity of the Starians of Tassul and Lessur long hesitated. However, its transparency and the light effects it reflects to the other planets strongly attracted the curiosity of the adventurous travelers who had reached Rudar. Choosing, therefore, a time when the conjunction of the globes made the passage easier, five abares of large dimensions departed from Lessur, came to touch and refresh themselves at Rudar, and from there audaciously launched out toward the distant regions where Élier revolved.

They had had to renew the breatheable air of the abares in the atmosphere of Rudar; but that air, thinner and less oxygenated than that of the other planets, corrupted so fast that it caused great havoc among the crews who had attempted that long voyage. A large number of the travelers died of it: and at the moment when they entered the air surrounding Élier, those who remained living were at the point of being asphyxiated. Luckily for the latter, the restorative atmosphere of Élier promptly came to reanimate their lungs and to quicken their blood, and they disembarked, in the number of several hundred, on the diaphanous earth which they had coveted.

II.

How utterly dreadful were those days of crossing!
Our intrepid Starians, wrecked in the ether,

Were dying in panting for a breath of air,
As mariners, becalmed on tropical water,
Would watch their thirsty throats wither with craving.

By their companions, the corpses of the dead
Were left to the void; and some of the moribund,
Who with their eyes gauged the abyss without end
Where every corpse took an infinite descent
And were near testing that immensity,
  Thought to know eternity
  By the depth of their interment.

III.

Those who only imagine transparency similar to that of water or crystal seen in our air have but an incomplete idea of the diaphanousness of the globe of Élier. The property of allowing light to pass through them possessed by bodies on that planet is equal even to that of space or of the most fluid ether; so that, to the Starians' eyes, the stars then located at the nadir were perceived through the globe of Élier as if no body had been interposed between the observer and those stars.

The arrival of the abares, of those opaque masses, frightened beyond all measure the animal kingdom of Élier, since beings from all parts of the globe perceived them floating at one point on its surface. Upon landing on Élier, the Starians at first could not comprehend the general effect of beings and accidents on that world. The first glance revealed nothing to them but confusion and vaporous, indefinite forms. Their gazes, unhabituated to such a spectacle, needed to become accustomed to and to learn to see different points on the globe; for the refraction of light brought to bear, according to the density, position, and distance of objects, dioptric effects difficult to apprehend by unpracticed eyes.

IV.

Plants and minerals, seas and atmospheric vapors here enjoy an absolute transparency. Only the humans and higher animals stand out clearly above that whole by the

opaline translucency of their bodies. Only their eyes, constructed like ours, are of an entirely opaque white. The muscles of that human race have the appearance of fibrous fasciculus, of amianthus. The blood which flows through their arteries is similar to lymph; the veinous blood seems to be of chyle or milk.

Despite a complexion offering in all its parts the vitreous appearance of a milky opal, the men of Élier are large, agile, and well proportioned. The women, a little smaller, are delicate and slightly diaphanous. Those dainty creatures, sporting extravagantly on the limpid surface of the earth of Élier, seemed to the Starians like so many graceful sylphs poised in the air.

V.

In this world there are no more colors;
An object's hue no longer marks the border
Of its external contours—
By tones of light they are depicted here.
The eye sees constantly
A thousand crystalline forms,
And pursues successively,
Through every object of those permeable realms
With an educated gaze, its endless
Explorations,
Down to profound regions
Where the crust of the globe has its basis.
However, considering the geological plan,
One sees all formations are not without coloration
And that entire beds comprised of their layers
Reflect in rings the colors,
The vivid hues of Iris.
This changing phenomenon explained to the Starians
Those colored lights sent back into the ether
Which made Élier admired from afar.

VI.

We have said it: the Starians could not make the acquaintance of the mysteries of that transparent world ex-

cept by degrees and after having been initiated by means of long attention. The natives, accustomed to visually sounding the depths of space and the globe's solid mass, distinguished marvelously, whether with the naked eye or with telescopes, the interior and exterior phenomena taking place in the bowels of the earth or on its surface, in the mineral kingdom or amid organic nature.

In that whole formed of beings and objects infinitely varied and all of perfect transparency, it is the difference in the density of bodies which indicate surfaces to the Élierians' expert eyes. With the utmost skill, they can comprehend at a glance the forms of everything; and those forms, themselves penetrable, by no means prevent their gazes from comprehending, through the nearest forms, those of bodies which the first would have hidden if they had been opaque. Thus, an inhabitant of Élier, casting down his exploring gaze from the top of a mountain, perceives at first, on the surface of the ground, forests spreading out a layer of diaphanous vegetation in dense tufts; and, thoroughly analyzing with his eyes each tree and each bit of moss, he can just as easily and distinctly study the superficial and deep strata from that point on earth down to the center. His gaze, going through the entire thickness of Élier, can even, by means of a telescope, examine the buildings of a city at the antipodes—if, however, it is not forced to turn away before the rays of a sun blazing at the nadir.

VII.

When the Starians wanted to lodge on that world, they found themselves extremely ill at ease in the Élierians' dwellings, the transparency of which not only went against their customs, but, even more, offended their sense of decency in the shameful circumstances of communal life. Therefore, they constructed with the abares a vast house which, instead of walls, was covered with canvas and furnished inside with tapestries.

VIII.

The Starians, encamped beneath that dark cover,
Received each day from their benevolent hosts
Bread as limpid and clear as the purest water,
Achromatic wines and transparent fruits.
The fire was about to go out; they went to a clearing
And cut some branches off a stout vegetable;
And the invisible flame, a ray of lightning,
Shot up crackling from that crystal fuel.

These people of Élier, with an opaline pallor,
Full of gentle benevolence, of friendly candor,
Overwhelmed our travelers with generosity.
From everywhere, on the Starian colony
There rained rich vestments of glassy cloth and lace
Draping their glazed lightness with brilliance and
grace,
The most splendid jewels and crystalline furniture,
Examples of fantastic ruby sculpture
And flowers more dazzling with radiation than
diamonds
In daylight scintillating like sudden flames.

IX.

Evoke now the winged inhabitants of the tenuous and almost imponderable air of Élier: a whole invisible creation of large insects, of ornitho-saurians, membranous animals rather than firm and monadic beings—how do I know?—vapors, effluvia which move inordinately around you, responding to you with cries, with humming, with the rustling of wings and with incomprehended touches. When you hear all those sylphs move and murmur at your sides, you search for them with your eyes and scarcely perceive, at times, a flash passing over your head like an arrow of vapor, less than a fleeting shadow. The animate beings which fill the air, because of the slight materiality of their structure, are the only ones which the Élierians' eyes have not yet been able to subject to examination. Thus, after

some time on Élier, the Starians told them the air seemed peopled with dreams.

Truly, for Élier's inhabitants, to know is to see. Equipped with magnifying glass and telescope, they had carried the study of the natural sciences to the point that there were few organic mysteries for them. Happy the observers who could witness *de visu* the greater part of the natural phenomena of structure and of decomposition!

The state of the Élierians' mores derive entirely from the physical conditions in which nature has placed them. Virtue and austerity are necessary to people whose fellows, from one end of the world to the other, at every instant can see their deeds and gestures. Dissimulation would be too difficult; and vice or the sense of shame are equally unknown. Natural men, they are loving and affable. Their character, animated by gentle and humane tendencies, can hardly bear the sight of suffering and evil; and, as each has his eyes on all, there is no unhappiness that is not consoled and no danger that is not instantly relieved. Among all these people, the law of nature has made solidarity complete. Moreover, by means of a singular faculty related to their propensity to see and to become acquainted with everything in the world, they are endowed with a kind of common understanding, of a logic of sympathy which might pass for a *universal consciousness*. That is why opinion and faith always establish themselves among those people without contradiction, without discussion, and, so to speak, unanimously and by intuition.

X.

The travelers were charmed by the hospitality of the children of Élier, who willingly helped them to satisfy their curiosity. The Starians, who at first had deplored the monotony of the planet, in the end found on that globe and in the exploration of its life's mysteries a source of inexhaustible pleasures; the earlier monotony was changed for them into a boundless variety, which the practice of observation augmented each moment by increasing the immensity of perspective for the more assured and better instructed eye.

Nevertheless, a vague rumor which had soothed them before their departure from Lessur incessantly carried

their thoughts back to their brothers on the lower satellites, for the idea of the whole Starian species returning to the mother planet had long been developing among the people. They hastened to return to Lessur and Tassul in order to join that expedition and to lend the help of their arms to the whole Starian nation, who perhaps were going to fight for their ancient possessions.

Chapter 5

THE ABARES

I.

Eight centuries had passed since the death of Ramzuel. Widespread on Tassul and Lessur, the Starians had multiplied to such an extent that they outnumbered the native races of those planets. However, an anxious hope or secret instinct had prevented them from regarding as definitive their establishment on the two planets. On the contrary, the memory of their original homeland—perpetuated among them by the descriptive works of Cosmaël, the animated pictures of Mundaltor, and, above all, the admirable poems of Séelevelt written after the flight of Ramzuel —at last inspired them with an inextinguishable yearning.

The Nemsèdes, who almost never left each other and who were, according to the Starian expression, the three faculties of the same soul, summed up for the exiled race all knowledge and all remembrance. They were the elders and superintending arbiters of the people. Through a thousand dangers, they had conducted Starian humanity from age to age to a perfect prosperity; but, thinking they had not completed their work of regeneration as long as the entire nation had not again taken possession of the natal world, they endeavored to maintain in the people's minds the desire and hope of reconquering Star. Already for a century, the Starians believed at any moment they would hear the hour of departure sound. A song of hope, a hymn marked by a saddened love for the planet with a disk overwhelming them in its vast proportions long had been sung on all the shores of Tassul and Lessur and in the intervening space crossed by abares; that song, attributed to Séelevelt, had fostered the thought of return.

II.

HYMN OF SÉELEVELT

In Tassul's fields covered with white vegetation
For hermaphrodites, o Starian, frequently,
When the brilliant birds make the trees all
scintillation,
You gaze into space and search it thoughtfully.

Our home planet is richer and more vast;
With more lovely skies and earth smiles Star.
Up there, our happiness waits, faithful and chaste,
In the cradle of our progenitor.

Run through these flowering woods, which Lessur
gives;
Listen to songs of inspired humanity.
These lands are scented—a gentle fluid leaves
Voluptuousness for your sensibility.

But our home planet is richer and more vast;
With more lovely skies and earth smiles Star.
Up there, our happiness waits, faithful and chaste,
In the cradle of our progenitor.

In the night of Rudar, our travelers explore
Its deaths, its will-o'-the-wisps and its steel tribe;
Or hurrying farther on to the colorless sphere,
They sound the secrets of a crystalline globe!

Go! the home planet is richer and more vast;
With more lovely skies and earth smiles Star;
Up there, our happiness waits, faithful and chaste,
In the cradle of our progenitor.

III.

It was in such a disposition that they found the man of immortal genius who then appeared. That man was named Marulcar. Remarked from his youth by Cosmaël, he first studied medicine and the sciences with the Nemsèdes; but,

soon becoming equally the friend of the other two Longevouses, he was the preferred student of all three, and, as they said to him, their son in spirit and knowledge. Following the advice of his spiritual parents, he resolved to employ his active mental powers and persevering energy in exclusive devotion to the project then occupying all imaginations and all courage. Marulcar, nominated by the Nemsèdes, was elected the nation's director on the two globes. By order of the people, he was commanded to work ceaselessly toward a general descent of the Starians onto the mother planet. Preparations lasted ten years, during which Marulcar, twenty times close to succumbing to the immensity of his task, the impatience of the people, and the slander of factions, was not able to continue his work except through the active support of the Nemsèdes. At last, on the eight-hundredth year of the Starians' living on the satellites, on the anniversary of Ramzuel's arrival on Tassul, two flotillas composed of innumerable abares left Tassul and Lessur at the same time and came together in the ether at the upper limits of Star's atmosphere.

IV.

In the wide expanse, a million ships floated;
And their immense caravan advancing, suspended,
Seemed the Milky Way transported and descended.

V.

They moved along for two days in perfect order,
But then the course of their journey was troubled; for,
In plunging into the atmosphere as they gathered,
A movement occurred in their train—hurrying
forward,
Some ships jostled each other in confusion.
And those bruised and agitated abares ran
Into the ranks below. Then, closer and closer,
All the harassed abares, trod down in disorder,
Broke the lines of ships in the path of their fall!
An entire world of voices sent forth the same wail!
How disaster increased as each tried to get clear!

It was a spectacle to inspire cries of fear.
The entire human race were pounding each other
In heaven agitated with frightful disorder.

In the forefront, Marulcar saw the column founder;
He commanded, "Halt!" and his flag conveyed the
order.
From afar the Starians understood the sign:
It was immobility, at that fatal time,
Which could save the flotilla. . . . All stopped
immediately,
And calm succeeded the tempest in the sky.

Delivered from their fear, the migrating nation
Reformed their spiral, and the immense procession
Wheeling, descended toward the ancestral land.

When the Starians' eyes could recognize the ground,
Anxiety gave way to ecstasy;
And millions sang the familiar melody.

Yes, our home planet is richer and more vast;
With more lovely skies and earth smiles Star.
Here, our happiness waits, faithful and chaste,
In the cradle of our progenitor.

BOOK IV

EXODUS AND DEUTERONOMY

I.

SUBMISSION OF THE REPLEUS

We left the Starian nation crowded in some one hundred thousand ovoid ships suspended in the middle regions of Star's atmosphere. Now it is the earth we are going to regain.

The landing and conquest took place without obstacle. The repleus had lost memory of mankind, but the stupefaction with which they were seized at a species coming to them endowed with such noble faculties paralyzed their defenses and everywhere made them yield the earth and its domination. Besides, the repleus, almost intelligent when they had enjoyed contact with mankind, once left to themselves had seen the brutality of their primitive nature regain the upper hand. When the Starians reconquered their homeland, a great number of repleus had returned to the wild state—to such a degree that their ancient masters could not doubt that, if the earth had continued belonging to them, the entire species would have relapsed into pure animality.

Of the several kingdoms which still formed repleu societies, that of Polymanie alone had the honor of being overthrown by Marulcar personally. The Starian commander, having heard by chance of the ignominious conduct of that idiotic nation, had the most extravagant among them placed on top of a monument formerly erected in memory of some famous warriors or very bloody battle

and, after having them flogged in the presence of all the people of Polymanie, sent them to serve in his stables. Those were the only reprisals the Starians allowed themselves upon the species of which they had so much to complain. As for the other kingdoms, when the lieutenants of Marulcar wanted to breathe upon them, they were no more.

II.

FIRST FOUNDATIONS. GENERAL CHARACTER AND SOCIAL INSTINCTS OF THE MODERN STARIANS. RENAISSANCE IN LITERATURE.

After the conquest, the Starian nation's work on the reconquered globe had to begin. Of the inheritance of their fathers, there remained only the earth, the naked earth. The works of mankind had been so well overthrown that the sites of former cities had become unrecognizable.

Abares permitting prompt exploration of terrestrial regions and immediate conveyance at any distance, the mass of humanity soon dispersed over the greater part of the continents and islands, gathering in particular spots or particular climates according to taste and family affinities: some stopped in the neighborhood of bramile colonies; others pitched their tents on shores adorned with celsinores; all found their souls expanding in the warm rays of Star's sky. Immediately, the earth felt the hand of man, and in several months, from east to west, villages with hundreds of houses appeared. Above all, the question was to live.

When the cares of first arrangements were past, the people looked to their fellows and social life began for them. It began, in the village or in the group, with equal and free relations. They remembered the testamentary words of Ramzuel, declaring proudly: *Respect my blood!* That is to say, you are noble, you are precious, you are almost divine—respect yourselves! Each drop of your blood is sacred, and each of your thoughts is intelligent; now, *make yourselves proud!*

These commentaries on Ramzuel's testament, developed and propagated by the Nemsèdes, had made of human

pride the true racial spirit of the new generations: veritable generations of monarchs. The liberty of a proud human nature—such had been the only law of the Starian societies on the satellites. That law was written into no code, but it lived in each heart. When Marulcar came to be elected the nation's chief, his genius had the honor, upon taking command, of summarizing the communal thought on his flag: *Exaltation of mankind*. But that law, thus proclaimed, was indeed for Starian humanity the law of nature; it was nothing more than the synthesis of feelings which dominated their minds and social relations.

Moreover, had even Marulcar, as head of the nation, succumbed to the temptations of despotism, would he have enchained with restrictive laws the liberty of those beings, whose just pride was already ill reconciled to even the shackles that nature and their own failings had placed upon the expansion of their faculties? Could he have ordained domesticity among people too proud of their blood to want to see it obedient and debased in their fellows? Could he have indifferently looked on suffering and misery, when every Starian, considering himself and his race as precious beings, found misery degrading and saw in suffering an outrage against the majesty of his perfectible nature? And war! who would think to hurl them against one another—these people whom Ramzuel, full of the horrible memory of all humanity gasping and butchered, had cried in a last sigh: Respect my blood! Yes, truly, human pride is the first social virtue of a free people.

Most certainly, the ideas of despotism and slavery were far from Marulcar's thoughts; but a feeling of suspicious pride made it difficult for the Starians to bear the command of a chief or a hierarchy of offices. Thus, when the insecurity which had led to Marulcar's dictatorship no longer existed, he found himself by virtue of that fact suddenly without subjects and without authority. Scarcely had the cares of the first foundations been dissipated, scarcely had several recently founded cities been able to serve as centers of intellectual development, than it was found that among these people, endowed with the most lively sensibility, the arts and literature were reborn, showing themselves in new forms.

At that time, Lesmirée was the city which especially took the initiative in the literary renaissance. Among the brilliant multitude who then flourished there, the poet

Nelech-Gamar, author of several prized comedies, is cited. The concise form of this book prevents us from speaking of him to the extent we might desire, and we should prefer to give a sample of his style, placing before the reader a translation of one of his shorter works. It must be said, after having had to recount so much suffering and adventure, we ourselves are rather glad to refresh our thoughts in setting forth one of the productions of that amiable period of Starian history, when literature resembled the first smile of a people being reborn.

LESSUR'S FORSAKEN

A Comedy in One Act

BY NELECH-GAMAR OF LESMIRÉE

Translated into Verse Imitating the Starian

CHARACTERS

MIRPAS, a Starian young man of Lessur; NIFRASSO, an old man; ILA, a Starian girl.

The action takes place on Lessur. The theater represents a grove adorned with bushes covered with rich flowers. In the background, Ila's cottage is seen.

SCENE I

Mirpas, Nifrasso.

MIRPAS.

My dear Nifrasso, I'm delighted that evil fate
Has left you forsaken here, as I. At least,
I am no longer alone. Though beautiful you're not,
Nor clever, still, an ugly companion is better than none.

NIFRASSO.

In turn, I admit to you, great was my sorrow when
On that fatal day I saw above my head the swarm
Of abares, without me, climbing the skies to conquer Star.
A hundred times I cursed that brutal Marulcar,
Who didn't bear in mind having the late ones looked for.
Thus, having missed the convoy of humanity,
I wandered, hoping a similar adversity
Had fallen on someone else. . . . In brief, the same misery
Held you here, when I found you in the nick of time.
My friend, in this deserted land where you've joined me,
I'm glad we've met; still, between us, I'll not disclaim
I was looking for another kind of companion.
Today, as always, I hoped to find, alone and forsaken,
Some lovely child that for a wife fate would have given.

MIRPAS.

What a cur, who, lost to all and without succor
Goes through the wastes and into the thickets seeking a lover!

NIFRASSO.

Despite myself, I'm always thinking: No woman here!
Most certainly, the Lessurians of these pleasant regions,
Seeing their globe abandoned forever by Starians,
Will send someone to populate these fertile lands.

Then, I know well, Nifrasso, so very sensitive,
Will become the husband of some sympathetic nymph.
But those women, it's said, do not make love
Like us. I'm vexed, indeed, that women of that race
Would have in their husbands hearts of fire, but flesh of ice.
But maybe, later, Starians rising again into space
Will come to Lessur. I'll go with them and discreetly abandon
A beauty who can give only fine emotion
To go to Star to indulge myself in a more earthly fashion.

MIRPAS.

Amazing! Don't you know, you ape, you filthy old man,
That in half a thousand years, not a single Starian
Could touch the soul of one of those flowers of Lessur?

NIFRASSO, *off stage.*

Not a woman
Will come to show her pretty face!

MIRPAS.

He takes no notice!

NIFRASSO, *always at the back-scene.*

Yonder I see a beautiful, shaded summerhouse!
A perfect order reigns around it. You'd say, Mirpas,
That it's not completely empty like others in this land.

MIRPAS, *ironically.*

Inhabited by women, surely; it's much overdone!

NIFRASSO,
returning with a distracted air and his hair disheveled.

Be quiet! . . . hush!

MIRPAS.

Beg pardon?

NIFRASSO, *with anxiety.*

Hush! (*Aside.*) At last, I've found

That single woman! ah! I saw her clearly; she's there
Asleep beneath that bush.

MIRPAS.

What is it?

NIFRASSO, *in a hollow voice.*

Talk softly, you hear!
(*Aside.*) So he learns nothing of my luck, I must send
him far;
He'll ruin it. (*To Mirpas.*) Let's go!

MIRPAS, *aside.*

The dog is playing a trick!
(*To Nifrasso.*) No, I want to stay here.

NIFRASSO.

Speak softer!

MIRPAS, *louder.*

What?

NIFRASSO.

You shriek
Like a horn, really! (*Aside.*) She's going to wake.

MIRPAS, *shouting.*

Ah! that I could break
Your eardrums a hundred times; but I want to shout!
Tra la! tra la la!

SCENE II

The same, Ila.

ILA, *hurrying up rubbing her eyes.*

Who could cause such noise in a vacant area?

NIFRASSO.

All is lost!

MIRPAS.

What do I see? A woman! Heavens, it's Ila!

NIFRASSO.

He knows her!

ILA, *still rubbing her eyes.*

As I was sleeping . . . to have disturbed my repose—
The tiresome fools!

NIFRASSO.

What? But aren't you completely amazed
To meet with us? Or have you fallen out with males?

ILA, *after a pause.*

I now live very well alone, and it's without pleasure
I find you two disturbing my solitary leisure.
And Mirpas knows that, having once chosen him as a lover,
He scorned me. Now, in turn, I could not see him.

NIFRASSO, *aside.*

I take heart.

ILA.

As for this old man, who so comically sighs to play that part—
Of all the hideous men I've ever seen, he's the worst.
Destiny had done better to spare me such company.

MIRPAS.

Ila, I swear, we'll treat you with every courtesy.

NIFRASSO.

We'll love you, even while lamenting your cruelty.

ILA.

But why, while our whole race exposes itself to danger,
Did you remain?

MIRPAS, *stammering.*

It's because of misunderstanding I'm here. . . .

NIFRASSO, *interrupting.*

It's necessary to decently explain the matter.
The day of departure, Oaï, at your rendezvous,
Was to have waited. But, suspecting her of deceiving you,
You had to go running to her house. There, with no one in view,
Mirpas discovered, as the chiefs' signal blazed in the sky,
That he had too long awaited the beautiful girl's good-bye.
The hour had struck. In haste, he returned to his family,
In hopes of embarking with them. But necessity had forced
Their departure, and they had already left when he arrived
Home—too late. And there you have why Mirpas remained.

ILA, *to Mirpas.*

Then, it was Oaï that Mr. Fickle loved at that stage?

NIFRASSO, *aside.*

Well, now he's done for—licked—and I have all the advantage.

ILA, *to Nifrasso.*

And you, my good old man, who kept you from the voyage?

NIFRASSO.

Oh, I don't know.

MIRPAS.

Oh! him—now, that's a narrative.
He's sure his wife, who doesn't bear him excessive love,
Saw the chance of making her farewell definitive
To her old brute; and she used it. Nifrasso's fond of drinking.
The very eve of the exodus, while he was indulging
His passion in the cellar's depths, she, following,
Set about the thing: in the second basement then,
With two turns of the key, he was locked up alone.

The wine's intoxication in his old head was soon gone;
He called, he cried, but no one heard. He stormed, he swore
In futile rage. At last, when he could break out of there,
Everyone had left.

ILA.

Really, that adventure
Is even funnier.

MIRPAS, *to Ila.*

But shouldn't you, too, in your turn,
Tell us why we don't find ourselves here alone and forsaken?

ILA.

Oh, me! It's very simple and doesn't make a yarn.
In this flowering wood, I was sleeping at some distance
When they embarked. Vaguely, I heard someone call for my presence;
But depression, the perfume of the flowers and . . . carelessness
So throughly weighed down my sleep, that the following day
I still slept.

NIFRASSO.

But after everyone had taken the way
Of the skies, left all alone, weren't you in great dismay?

ILA.

Me? Oh, no!

NIFRASSO.

Didn't anxiety or boredom,
Then, ever come to torment you in a life so lonesome?
But, what did you do?

ILA.

Oh, very often, I slept. It's a custom
I revel in! . . . How I love to dream in the chiaroscuro
Of drowsing! . . . I prefer Lessur to Star for that—Lessur,

Where the perfumed breeze, where waves of fragrant and
pure air
So softly prolong that sleep.

MIRPAS, *aside.*

The more I look at her,
The more I like her. She has, above all, a languorous fire
In her eyes! . . . When she loved me, I never noticed; that's
singular.
(*To Ila.*) Tell me: before, why didn't I ever see in you
This passion?

ILA.

It's true; I used to sleep less than others—a clue
That then I was very stupid.
(*Ironically.*) I was in love with you. . . .
So many nights were lost to sleep.

MIRPAS.

Ah! how I bewail
That vanished time! I so much desire to have it still!
I would love you! Alone, you are worthy to be adored, Ila.
Come, I beg you to pardon my blindness, my stupid
error. . . .

ILA.

Indeed, I'm most worthy to be loved; and, in this hour,
Since he can't love another, Mirpas makes himself my
lover.

NIFRASSO.

You do well to be suspicious of that unfaithful man,
(*Pointing to Mirpas.*)
Who would deceive you. I alone in these regions, dear
maiden,
Could know how to offer you sincere and real affection.
You'd be my life. . . .

ILA.

Ah, bah! you too!

MIRPAS, *to Ila.*

Well, I'll repair
At once my past mistake, and I'll be willing to hear

Without complaining, Ila, scoffing at a true fervor.
Yet, if ever you believed I had honor in my soul,
Let me swear that my loyal heart loves no other girl
But you!

ILA.

It's unfortunate; but how can I not fail
To believe in a flame so newly kindled? Besides, the thought
Of my wounded dignity also commands me not
To listen as long as I have no rivals in this spot.

NIFRASSO, *to Mirpas.*

There you are, Mirpas, *this* time you're in full flight.
(*To Ila.*) You see, my lovely child, I alone am worthy of trust.
My love for you could not be put in doubt an instant.

ILA, *aside.*

How he eyes me!
(*To Nifrasso.*) I fear your approach . . . you make me worry.

NIFRASSO.

Bah! One quickly gets used to ugliness. Well, try
To love me a little.
(*Amorously.*) I kiss your feet! . . .

ILA.

You make me weary!

NIFRASSO.

Under your disdain, do not think my heart flinches;
With a devouring fire, for your charms, it blazes, it scorches!

ILA.

At your age, my good old gentleman, such discourses
Are absured. . . . Good-bye!

MIRPAS, *throwing himself in front of her.*

What?

ILA.

I forbid you to follow my steps.

MIRPAS.

But what will you do?

ILA, *yawning slightly.*

I'm going to sleep.

MIRPAS.

Again?

ILA.

Mirpas,
Only love keeps me wide-awake . . . and . . . I'm not amorous.

(*She vanishes into her home.*)

SCENE III

During the following aside, Nifrasso is seen in the background prowling around Ila's home.

MIRPAS, *sadly.*

Is it really Ila? . . . How amiable and playfully sweet!
How charming she is; and I feel I could throw myself at her feet!
But, I've offended her, and the lady is obstinate.

(*He reflects.*)

What to do, alas! . . . but I have a plan. . . .

(*He continues to walk about musing.*)

SCENE IV

Mirpas, Nifrasso.

MIRPAS, *brusquely and as if with resentment.*

I'm leaving directly;
I can't be subjugated to a little lady—
That's why I'm going.

NIFRASSO.

You've been converted to that plan quickly!

MIRPAS.

I'm going to try to reach the nearest shore on foot,
And if I reach there, then I will be able to wait
For some Lessurian vessel.

NIFRASSO.

All considered, the flight
Could be attempted.

MIRPAS.

Are you coming with me? It ought to succeed.

NIFRASSO, *with feigned hesitation.*

I walk quite badly; the road is long and very hard:
Really, I'm afraid I'd hamper you.

MIRPAS.

Indeed!
You'd let me leave here alone?

NIFRASSO.

Mirpas, doubtlessly,
You understand, in these regions of exile, all it costs me
To part with such a friend; but I'd reach eternity
Along the way.

MIRPAS.

Well, if that's so, I'll take my way;
For this place is a burden to me, and I don't know why I should stay.

(*He embraces Nifrasso.*)

Good-bye, Nifrasso; and good luck!

(*He embraces him again and exits.*)

SCENE V

NIFRASSO,
watching him go away and with a gesture of joy.

Go away!
And, if it's possible, may I never see you again!
Ah, happy spite; and how well it's done!

(*Gazing into the distance.*)
He's beginning to run.
(*With transport.*)
She's mine! . . . Now, certainly, she must give a demonstration
Of a sweeter disposition.
(*Still looking.*) I don't see him, happily.
Let's go! Now, discretion will be unnecessary.
Let's rout out the beauty, and let her feminine charms fall to me
Without delay! (*He goes to knock at Ila's door.*)
Open up! (*He knocks again.*)

SCENE VI

Nifrasso, Ila.

ILA, *opening the door.*
Is it you? . . . *You* I detest!
Where, then, is Mirpas?

NIFRASSO.
He's run away on a nimble foot.

ILA.
Mirpas is gone?

NIFRASSO, *smirking.*
More than an hour ago; but I'm left.
You won't lose anything. You weren't sleeping: see, love comes!

ILA, *impatiently.*
I couldn't sleep. . . . What urgent motive induced Mirpus
To flee?

NIFRASSO.
I don't know.

ILA.
But, where did he direct his course?

NIFRASSO.

Toward the sea, I think.

ILA, *aside.*

I was scoffing and inflexible
With him, and I was wrong.

NIFRASSO, *approaching Ila.*

His absence must be eternal;
So, let's not think . . . let's think of us. My lovely girl,
A simple question is posed to us, in my opinion.
We're here in a great wasteland apart from everyone:
Not having a choice, try to love me, and we'll form a union.

ILA.

Don't you feel at all how these speeches of a half-wit
Make you despicable? For my peace, therefore, I entreat
You to leave this area.

NIFRASSO.

Don't see joking in it:
The law of nature, in bringing us alone to this place,
Has married us.
(*Gallantly.*) And so, to leave you would be brainless.
I love you so much, I'm pressed to avail myself of my rights,
My little wife. . . . (*He wants to kiss her.*)

ILA.

O heaven! help!
(*Aside.*) He frightens me.
(*To Nifrasso.*)
Don't come near me, for I fear you like an osprey;
My repugnance toward you is so strong that, in reality,
If I had to choose between you and an ape as a neighbor,
I'd choose the ape.

NIFRASSO, *angrily.*

Well, too bad; in spite of your displeasure,
As to your refusing me, ah! here you haven't the leisure.
(*With vexation.*)
I'm really sorry that by my ugliness I offend.
Every mortal man needs a woman: therefore, I need

One; and, since, besides you, there isn't one in this world,
It's you I need.
(*Calmer.*) Dear child, let's reason correctly, then:
With a good husband, in a while, ugliness doesn't mean
A thing. In these vacant woods, you'd someday need protection.
Is it without cause that fate has brought us face to face?
If the Starians have, by misfortune, perished in space,
It's us that Heaven would have reserved to save the race
From destruction. In the name of heaven, of humanity
Of which you'd be the mother, Ila, consent . . .

ILA.

But really,
What are they to me—you, and the race and posterity!

NIFRASSO, *furious.*

This is too much! Fate, with you, wants me to establish
The new species, understand that!

ILA.

I'm under the lash!

NIFRASSO.

Surely, I'll not allow humanity to perish
By the trifling stubbornness of your mind.

ILA.

Well! dear sir,
If you must remain here, then it's Ila who will retire.
I'll flee you and know how to live hidden in some other quarter.
(*She starts to go.*)

NIFRASSO, *rushing up to restrain her.*

Flee! . . . do you think so? flee! and deprive me, all my life,
Of a possession such as you!

ILA.

Mercy!

NIFRASSO, *holding her back.*

You'd be ravished with my rapture!

ILA, *entreating.*

Pity! Let me go.

NIFRASSO.

To live without . . . oh, *that* I don't desire.

ILA.

I'm going to die!

NIFRASSO, *trying to drag her along.*

Come, in your house I want to have you.

ILA, *with desperation.*

Mercy! . . . Help! . . . But there's no one here to come to the rescue!

NIFRASSO, *dragging her along.*

I have you: Come!

ILA.

He's stronger. . . . Heaven! what can I do?

SCENE VII

The same, Mirpas.

MIRPAS.

You'd better let go, you filthy cur!

ILA, *throwing herself into Mirpas' arms.*

Mirpas!

NIFRASSO, *in terror.*

It's him!

MIRPAS, *to Ila.*

I wanted to go, but couldn't.

ILA, *further moved.*

Good, for I feel love's flame!

NIFRASSO, *aside.*

He's lying, the cheat; his leaving was only a low stratagem
To compromise me.

MIRPAS, *to Ila.*

Ila, yours is all my heart's fondness!
I'll marry you before heaven, and on my honor, Mirpas
In pleasing and respecting you will find his happiness.

ILA, *naïvely.*

Take it, here is my hand; it still trembles.

NIFRASSO, *with desperation.*

This can't happen! . . .
Ah! but, permit me! for both of us, there's only one
Girl in the world; well, in all justice, let's see to the question;
In fairness, we must share her.

ILA.

I'm laughing now: this greybeard
Is mad!

NIFRASSO.

Let's be reasonable . . . without a wife, what good am I?
(*To Mirpas.*)
Your poor life partner is, consequently, deluded.
Could I live in these woods like a wild man?

MIRPAS.

Come, quiet anxiety;
For I'm going to end your vain, idiotic misery:
We, too, are going to voyage to Star. Just now, when scarcely
Had I left this area, I saw an abare wandering
Above me. I shouted and made signs; and they, understanding,
Instantly descended. They told me that, after arriving
In the wonderful lands of Star, the active influence
Of several friends had had the abare leave in a trice
To search for and rescue us, and our deliverance
Is at hand, awaiting only us—the crew is there.

ILA, *with regret.*

But to live together all alone would have been so fair!

MIRPAS.

Oh, Ila, I'll be your faithful husband anywhere.

NIFRASSO, *to Mirpas.*

Embrace me! for my heart is drunk with the joy of my life!
I'll plunge into sensual pleasures! (*After reflection.*)
But do be good enough
To take me somewhere else than where I can find my wife.

ILA, *archly.*

Mirpas, I'll be watching you. I'll see that you refrain
From inconstant love. Tricks and evasions would be inane;
For, since I'm in love, I warn you, I'll never sleep again.

THE END OF LESSUR'S FORSAKEN

III.

FOUNDING OF A NEW CULT. REVELATION OF THE NEMSÈDES.

During the time the organization of recently born communities lasted, the triumvirate of the Nemsèdes retained only a certain moral influence over the scattered clans of the new society. That state of affairs lasted some years. Nevertheless, left to their instincts and without principles to organize their rationality, the masses of those intelligent people, in order to satisfy the mind and set down the moral law to each person, had begun investigating the remains of the ancient religions to adjust them to their moral needs. The concern of the Nemsèdes was aroused by these tendencies, and they saw an immense danger for the morality and social virtues of Starian humanity. Profoundly convinced of the corrupting effect of certain religious forms on the intellect, they courageously resolved to stop the mutation of minds and made themselves the prophetic legislators of the Starian clans. To those dis-

quieted masses, who were searching for an idol or a belief according to their fancy, the triumvirate of Nemsèdes responded with this dogma, which resounded from one side of the world to the other: BELIEVE IN YOURSELF.

Believe in yourself: that is to say, have no other cult than the perfection of human nature. Unrelentingly enlarge the faculties of those intelligent beings who have already subdued the earth and who, by the progress of their industry, will in the future become a race of demigods.

Thus was founded the cult of mankind, the religion the germ of which all Starians already carried in the depths of their hearts. These tenets, moreover, were only the consecration of ideas which the Nemsédes, for eight centuries, had sought to make dominant in the minds of the generations they had governed. At that moment, therefore, the peoples of Star formulated thus their act of faith: RESPECT, PERFECTION, DEIFICATION OF THE HUMAN BEING.

The Starians, having become fervent disciples of the completely natural and human religion the practices of which they drew from the instructions of the three pontiffs, immediately instituted a priesthood to officiate over the parishes of the new cult in each community and in each group. These priests were of two orders. Some were charged with the physical instruction of mankind; they were the medical officers. The others were charged with mankind's education, moral hygiene, and perfecting; they were the civil officers. It was under the protection of this sort of theocracy that the recently founded cities grew and developed.

IV.

PHILOSOPHICAL TENETS OF SÉELEVELT

The metaphysical and religious ideas taught in the modern Starians' temples, we wish to say in the schools, by the priests of the moral order—at once judges, counselors, and teachers of the people—were due in large measure to the direction of Séelevelt.

The tenets of the new faith's revealer can be outlined in a few words: What is, is one; and that unity Séelevelt calls the *Uncreated Panapérante,* which includes three ele-

ments or manifestations: space, matter, and God, the active and intelligent power. None of the three elements of the Panapérante could exist separated from the two others: all three are infinite, eternal, and necessary. Séelevelt rejects creation.[5]

As for the human soul, the opinion commonly accepted by Ramzuel's descendants was that which had been expressed by the majority of philosophers and religious lawmakers of Star's ancient world and which can be translated thus: After death, the souls of the virtuous become more sensitive and more intelligent and are carried off into an enchanted sphere to taste a thousand pleasures, while the souls of the wicked, losing thought and sensitivity, are dissolved and cease to exist as souls.[6] Our souls, Séelevelt said in his turn, are nothing but an emanation, a gemma detached from the intelligent power; and that particle of divine power almost always returns after death to blend itself in the universe with the infinite sources from which it was separated.

Soon, however, Séelevelt, himself surpassing the opinion of the ancients, taught that the soul, through use and development of its faculties during this life, can grow to

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[5]Here are the principal arguments on which he bases this: One could not conceive of absolute nothingness; that is to say, nothing in the world, neither time, nor matter, nor space. Moreover, imagine, if it is possible, that enormity, that nothingness. Well! could it last but an instant; one would then answer: Where is God? That power no longer has a reason for being; it does not exist, nor could it exist.

Our minds, which by the succession of days and years can conceive of a future eternity, can equally, by taking the present moment as a point of departure, count, count forever such a succession of days passing up to now, and also generate the idea of a past eternity.

The idea of creation comes from the analogy which we unreflectively make between objects which surround us and the world itself. Everything appears to begin and end. Therefore, the universe itself must have been made like everything else. Indeed, nothing begins or ends in this world; for not an atom of matter, nor of physical or vital force is annihilated or lost. We see only the transformations of matter under the influence of physical forces or under the breath of God, the intelligent force. Séelevelt asked: Since nothing begins in the world, why should the world itself have begun?

[6]According to the ancient Starians, this life is an *experiment,* a touchstone. God poured upon the earth all the souls from his hands to judge which merited life. Only virtuous souls were well enough structured to live eternally. Vicious souls, on the other hand, were broken up and became, after this life, what they had been before. This wholesome belief maintained by the people, incited individuals to virtue in order to achieve, through it, the perpetuity of life.

the point of constituting an individual force capable of surviving the dissolution of material elements. The soul, then, having become a great intelligence, can resist absorption by the active universal power, which tends to assimilate souls, and to constitute an immaterial individuality: the person, then, *becomes a god!* To become a god—such is the goal of all intellectual life according to Séelevelt.

These dogmatic ideas, which were so well in accord with the modern Starians' proud nature, traveled over the world and gave a new enthusiasm to the cult of the moral and material progress of mankind. At the head marched the Nemsèdes, for a long time yet the pontiffs of the cult.

V.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF MARULCAR

Some years had passed since the definitive establishment of communities, and almost all had prospered greatly, some in acquiring agricultural importance, others in becoming true industrial cities. Marulcar, though fallen from supreme rank, had not ceased to be one of the most ardent supporters of new colonization. Helped by a large number of friends whose families had pitched their tents around his, in an admirable location he had laid the foundations of a city which became the most prosperous among the prosperous. That city received the name of Tasbar.

Since communication from group to group and from nation to nation was beginning to become more frequent, the entire world felt the need of a political organization to regulate relations and to centralize information and skills, to then distribute them throughout the earth. Nevertheless, fear of establishing an authority dangerous to liberty, which each felt within himself as a proud necessity, caused the communities to hesitate for some time in accomplishing the project.

The report of the marvels created by Marulcar and the services rendered by this Starian Moses designated him the only legislator capable of organizing the political authority of the Starian world. Finally, on the advice of the Nemsèdes, whose doctrines Marulcar had embraced in

part, the communities sent for him asking for a form of government which respected the freedom and independence of each person and each community. Ceding to their request, Marulcar gave them the following political constitution, which, put to a vote in each nation, was unanimously approved and immediately put into effect.

Marulcar entrusted the federal power, supreme arbiter of international relations and of the political destinies of the Starian peoples, to an assembly named the Chamber of Axiarchs. At the beginning, the choice of the Axiarchs, in the number of four hundred, would be made in the following manner: A commission of delegates from each community named, by a plurality of votes, half the first Axiarchs. The latter, thus constituted, elected by accession the other half of their colleagues. The assembly, complete from that time on, after a member's death, would restore by a new nomination the loss which it had sustained. The choice of the Axiarchs could not take place except from categories wisely and carefully determined by Marulcar.

It must be said that dignity continually fell to the most distinguished and illustrious men. The Axiarchs were extremely interested in taking in all celebrities and all the glorious, since their authority, almost entirely moral and finding all its power in the prestige of the names composing the assembly, would be weakened and friendless the day they would deviate from the founding ideals to become a coterie. Moreover, Starian history demonstrates that the Axiarchs' power was more respected and absolute in proportion as the celebrities comprising it were more brilliant and renowned.

VI.

THE TRIPLE FORMULA, FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIAL LAW

Immediately after its definitive establishment, the assembly of Axiarchs—which included Marulcar, some of his former lieutenants, and the Nemsèdes, Cosmaël, Séelevelt, and Mundaltor—began the course of its deliberations by a discussion of the principles or foundations of civil society and of natural law.

The first of these principles, which first and unanimously came forth, acclaimed by every voice because it consecrated the free, proud individualism of each Starian, was this: *The independence of each in respect of all.*

At the time the axiarchal power was instituted, the earth was still in its first occupancy; each had taken of it what he needed to feed and clothe himself. The Axiarchs, seeing that property was excellent as a condition of individual independence and social order and that it was a source of great satisfaction and of gentle repose for mankind, resolved to establish it upon a solid basis. By a wise and farsighted decision and so that the first social law, *the independence of each in respect of all,* might be observed and find its practical sanction even in the future—so that, above all, contemporary equality would not be altered too much and so that the earth at least, the primary source of wealth, would always be accessible to the need of enjoyment which is often that of possession—it was forbidden for an individual to acquire more than a fixed quantity of ground. Up until the division of the entire globe, nonoccupied lands had to be reserved for the increase of the human population.[7] Thus, the Axiarchs set down as the second standard of the natural social law: *The possession of the soil stands limited.*

Finally, on the proposal of Marulcar, whose moral doctrines had begun to come to light, a third formula was added to the first two. It was this: *Intentionally caused suffering is an impiety and war a sacrilege.*

The three propositions of the Axiarchs, submitted to the approval of the people and accepted everywhere, became forever the constitutional law:

The independence of each in respect of all.

Limitation of real property.

Intentionally caused suffering is an impiety and war a sacrilege.

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[7]The possession of an enclosure or an orchard, said the Axiarchs, who proposed to limit real property, procures as much happiness as vast domains; and to taste the pleasures of property it is unnecessary to possess whole plains. Moreover, after the disposition of the Starian law, each landowner was permitted to increase the value of the real estate fallen to his share; only on his death did that increased value return to the common domain to be redivided afterward more equitably. We will add that private property was to be and was unlimited.

VII.

MARULCAR'S MORAL PRINCIPLES. HIS TOMB.

Marulcar's influence caused the Axiarchy to establish itself at Tasbar. Moreover, that great man, who was up to the end the instrument of the Tasbarites' material prosperity, had an even greater effect upon that people's moral tendencies. We spoke just now of the moral ideas of Marulcar. Like almost all Starians, imbued with the Nemsèdes' metaphysical tenets, toward the end of his life, he thought he ought to complete their work in establishing the ethics of humanity on its true foundations. His ideas were more particularly accepted and put into practice by the nation which recognized him as their founder, and with difficulty will we understand the Tasbarites' customs and manners, upon which we will be obliged to expand, if we do not first glance at the moral doctrines of Marulcar.

When one seeks to discover the law and the motive of the actions of humans and of animals, said Marulcar, one finds, in the final analysis, that they act and decide according to how they are affected, in other words, how they feel. Thus, the human is first a sensitive being. He feels, and his agreeable or painful sensations irresistibly elicit his thoughts and actions.

Feeling here is incontestably the source of all human morality. The individual, whatever he may say or do, avoids pain, unhappiness, evil and seeks pleasure, happiness, good. Instinctively, primitively, naturally for the animal, for the child, and for the man, pain is evil and pleasure good. The perception of pleasure and pain is the consciousness of good and evil, which is the criterion, the foundation of the moral law. With the human, reason causes him to extend to others what was the result of his own sensations and thus governs his relationships with his fellows.[8] He is moved by another's suffering by thinking

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[8]Each repeats that conscience is innate in mankind for guidance in the practice of good; but, on the other hand, each feels very much that conscience is the fruit of education when he takes the greatest care in making it an essential part of his children's upbringing. Conscience, in the exaggeration of that feeling called remorse, is really something like the fear of the unknown, the most terrible of all fears.

of what he would experience if he suffered the same. From this he develops pity, the sensitive source of the social virtues: the instinctive horror of his flesh, which shudders with fear, teaches him not to do to another what it dreads and repels with all its energy, and, as a final corollary, to do to others what seems to him good and agreeable.[9]

Human existence in its actual state has only two conditions, two manners of being: pain and pleasure. When the sum of pleasures or agreeable sensations is greater than that of mental pain and suffering, the person is considered happy; he is unhappy when the contrary occurs. Therefore, to banish suffering and to multiply joy seemed to Marulcar the unique object of all philosophy and morality.

The Starian moralist then devoted himself to an examination of the nature and quality of life's pleasures. Here is a brief survey of it: The satisfaction of physical needs, accomplished with refinement, good breeding, and moderation, diffuses over existence a charm indispensable to that part of happiness which constitutes well-being, while the exaggerations and excesses into which we allow our appetites to fall are only capable of deadening or even preventing all feelings of true pleasure.

The affections, friendship, love, and all the sentiments which suffice in certain circumstances for happiness in life, still can be developed and rendered sweeter through what Marulcar maintained to be the source of the highest pleasures, that is to say, through the direction and education of the mind.

The development of the intellectual faculties—here is the repeated cry and teaching of all Marulcar's book. It is intelligence, sensitivity, which gives moral grandeur to the affective sentiments. They give to the feelings intense force and chaste delights which permit souls to unite at the same time as bodies. For the beast, love is the flesh; for the intelligent person, love is, above all, sentiment. Let us repeat it: education, in developing the intelligence, increases in the same proportion *the sensibility, foundation of morality.*

This *sensibility,* which can overwhelm a person with the

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[9]It is the suffering soul that has the most intense pity. The child is cruel because he has not yet suffered sufficiently.

most intense joys, sometimes brings him its portion of pain and anguish. Above all, the affective passions of love and friendship, of an almost divine charm when they exist between noble-minded individuals, also become the causes of the greatest moral suffering. Those pangs of heart themselves strengthen and exalt the sensibility and make the person apt to perceive certain pleasures more vividly. It was, therefore, to those afflicted souls that Marulcar addressed his admonitions and advice.

The pleasures of the senses, the joys of sentiment, he said, render one liable to equivalent suffering. Unalloyed joys, on the contrary, are found in the practice of the arts and in study. These joys are exclusively the gift of education and comprise the intellectual pleasures properly speaking. What is more remarkable is that intelligence and pleasure thus grow and are developed by each other. The intelligence enlarges the sphere of joys drawn from art or study; and study and art, in their turn, increase the intelligence; and this happens *sempre crescendo,* up to the intellectual perfection and the supreme sensual pleasure.

Would that we could follow Marulcar in his brilliant apology for artistic voluptuousness and the profound and calm happiness of passionate study! Perhaps one day we shall attempt to render those fervent words which solicit and win one to intellectual pleasure. We would describe with him the horripilational spasms of the dilettante, the inebriating shocks of the spectator of a dance to thrilling measures, the ecstasies of the painter before a masterpiece, the intelligent delirium of the poet moved by the splendors of a noble thought, the cool but sustained contentment of a scientist whose mind is incessantly discovering, and, above all, the ravishments of each sensitive person to the vibrations of the harmonies which spring from the earth and skies and which inundate him with their poetry. In those pages, the moralist abdicates in order to yield place to the artist, the only one, according to Marulcar, whose mission it is to instruct and *moralize.*

We see the legislators agreeing to put the Starians on the path of spiritual progress: the prophet Séelevelt in causing them to hope for the immortality of the soul; the moralist Marulcar, who wrote from a point of view closer to human nature, in making of intellectual perfection and of *moral sensibility,* the conditions of terrestrial happiness.

In concluding his treatise on morality, Marulcar passes over his book's line of thought, which is this: What will be the natural and inevitable aspiration of human beings in this world? The search for happiness and the cult of pleasure. And what gives us happiness? People in general achieve regular happiness through work. A person of the select few may come to the most delectable happiness and most divine pleasures through study and through practice of the arts. The whole law of natural morality is in these simple precepts. Such is the résumé of Marulcar's moral philosophy, which in its entirety was accepted into the Tasbarites' manners and customs.

Upon that great man's death, which occurred in the fortieth year of the Starians' modern era, dated from the day of their landing on the earth, the Axiarchy had his tomb placed in the very palace of their sessions. That immense edifice, having become at once the Pantheon of the dead and of the living, received, with the statue of Marulcar, those of all the glories of humanity; and each century in succession brought to that temple its share of statues of geniuses, illustrious officers of that land of intellect. Mundaltor, who had produced the plans for the palace of the Axiarchy, on the front facing the east had fixed in diamond letters this *Credo* of the Starians:

Respect
Perfection *of Mankind.*
Deification

On the western front were these three formulas containing the whole law of the peoples:

The independence of each in respect of all.
The possession of the soil stands limited.
Intentionally caused suffering is an impiety, war a sacrilege.

INTERPOLATED INFORMATION

The books and manuscripts found in the heights of the Himalayas had belonged to a Starian named Sesello, who had gone to spend his solitary and studious old age on the slopes of the peak of Rerriton. These books were found mingled with personal correspondence which Sesello must have hidden in some secret cupboard, concealed in a corner of the rock where he had hollowed out his dwelling. A dreadful eruption of the volcano, which I believe destroyed it many years afterward, threw into infinity these documents encased in the rock.

By going through the diverse writings fallen into my possession, I was able to give form to this account and to extract the substance of this work's first four books. What follows, on the contrary, is nothing but the word-for-word translation of a small opus which I found among Sesello's books and manuscripts. It is the *Voyage of a Tassulian to Tasbar,* which to me seems a rather exact and very succinct survey of Starian civilization at the time when the historical data serving as the basis of this book stopped. I have preserved in the Tassulian's account two literary pieces which were found inserted, persuaded the reader will not be displeased to see several productions of Tasbarite literature.

BOOK V

VOYAGE OF A TASSULIAN

TO TASBAR

What powerful and pure torrents of light bathe the earth and the waters in these regions! What further charms are in these mild nights, or rather in these half-days successively blue, rose, green, or violet, infinitely varying the landscapes, which are the poetry of nature! Truly, we are in Tasbar, under the most beautiful climate of Star's brilliant sky.

How this city seems always in festival! Wouldn't you say that here happiness, dignity, and spirit circulate with the air and swell the lungs? The monuments, draperies, decorations, and exteriors of porticos and streets, just like the human face, here have an air of happy intelligence. It is indeed good, the Tasbarite city; it is the marvel of the planet Star.

Why do these crowds of people rush by with the smile of an approaching pleasure on their faces, some toward the temple-schools or the concert halls, others toward the museums, theaters, and learned societies, all seeking a noble joy? Why does art sparkle from all that is the work of mankind? Why this profusion of sculptures and ornaments and these melodies which resound and follow you night and day? It is because we are living in Tasbar, the artists' city of the Starian universe!

I left Avia, one of Tassul's principal cities, after having long and tenderly embraced old Teusneuth, my adored *parens,* the unique source of my blood and life, and a crossing of several days brought me to the capital of the Starian world, where I disembarked on the thirty-fifth day of the month of Estrella of the eighteen hundred sixty-second revolution of Ruliel, reckoning from the era of Marulcar. Like the majority of Tassulians who came with

me, I lodged at a hotel managed by a compatriot and located on one of the quays bordering the principal arm of the Trira, the river which flows through the western part of Tasbar.

Like all the younger generation of Tassulians, I had a rather complete idea of the rudiments of the Starian language, which has, so to speak, become our own, and of the history of the Starian peoples. Nevertheless, after several days spent in Tasbar, I realized that I had to study more of Starian civilization's history to understand its present customs, to appreciate the beauties of its language, of its literature, and to follow the splendid development of its arts. The religious writings of the Nemsèdes, the books of Marulcar, with the Tasbarite moralists' commentaries on them, and especially the chronicles of the evolution of Starian societies after the conquest of the globe under the repleus, were the first objects of my studies.

When the Starians had left the lands of Tassul and Lessur in machines similar to that which carried me from my small globe to bring me to this one, they scattered by families or aggregates into the different territories, taking the land they needed. The communities, almost all organized on the same model, afterward formed a federation, as it is said, under the patronage of the Axiarchy. But after some years, the majority, in grouping themselves according to their affinities, had formed several hundred little nations administered by civil officers of very limited authority and replaced by thirds each year. The duties of these officers were of the simplest, since the only law they had to interpret consisted in the sacramental formulas inscribed on the temple of Tasbar. Each community, on the other hand, remained ever faithful to its beliefs and its original organization, with priests of two orders, the doctors and the teachers.

After Marulcar's death, the social influence of the three Nemsèdes, whom our parents had seen on Tassul as the sovereign pastors of the Starian nation, was exercised only with respect to religion, of which they were regarded as the prophets. Those three preternatural persons, to whom the Starians previously owed the most remarkable geniuses of their race—Ramzuel and Marulcar, among others—fixed their abodes in Tasbar and figured perpetually in the Axiarchy's ranks. It was noticed with a certain solicitude that those people, who had lived nearly three thousand years,

finally were beginning to grow old, and it was no longer doubted that, however much their lives were prolonged, they nevertheless would naturally find a limit. Each of them, in a self-assigned sphere of study, continued, as in the past, to gather together all science, art, and literature —in a word, to render more universal and more fertile the cult of mankind. Across centuries and generations, they had pursued resolutely and with all their strength this supreme goal: *the human made god.* Their presence in Tasbar contributed not a little to giving the Tasbarite nation the intellectual superiority which it possesses over the other nations. Let me also add that the influence of the Axiarchy, composed of all who were most illustrious on earth, made Tasbar the privileged city of Star. Moreover, Marulcar, in founding this beautiful city, had marvelously chosen its location, the geographical center of Star's immense continents and the connecting link of the world map. Its position is thrice happy, for Tasbar is found at the junction of the two continents, on the shores of an immense sea, and at the mouths of three of this world's largest rivers—the Trira, the Saguir, and the river beloved by the Tasbarites, the Lampédousiami, with its enchanting banks. These favorable conditions caused people to come here in great numbers, and several cities were founded successively in the neighborhood of Tasbar. With time, the expansion of Tasbar and the neighboring cities became such that all soon became intermeshed in one agglomeration;[10] thus is explained the present immensity of the capital of the nations recognizing the Axiarchy's moral authority.

Other peoples closely followed the Tasbarites in their civilized development. The Pamisians, the Lesmirs, the Risdoles, and the Mirélians,[11] almost all descended from the Starian colonies of Lessur, threw an intense brilliance over the eminently progressive world.

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[10]Since it is impossible to place before the reader a world map of the Starian globe, we ought to say, for the comprehension of this passage, that the greater part of the two hemispheres are occupied by two continents which communicate with each other by the Isthmus of Tasbar. The city is located on the south of the isthmus and at the mouth of the three rivers—the Trira, flowing from east to west, the Saguir, coming from the northwest, and the Lampédousiami, flowing from north to south. [*Defontenay's note.*]

[11]The Pamisians and the Lesmirs inhabit the western continent; the Risdoles and the Mirélians are peoples of the eastern continent.

In the histories of these peoples there is not a trace of war or of spilled blood; the Starian law has always been scrupulously observed in that respect. Short-lived dissensions occurring in a few of the small states dispersed over the earth are of interest only to the political historian. Rarely did the ambitious attempt to change the government of freedom and independence Marulcar advised. Only one succeeded in this—among a distant tribe of the Térépans.[12] That man, whose name history has never pronounced and which is thus lost to posterity, having seduced several individuals with enticements of goods and gross pleasures, attached them to himself and with them succeeded in enlisting a troop of debauched and lost individuals who formed a sort of militia. Thus constituted, the force served their chief in having himself declared absolute master of the state. The Axiarchy at Tasbar, incapable of wishing blood and battle, did not arm the other peoples in order to overthrow that absurd government. They contented themselves with sending the Térépans emissaries who distributed among the masses an extract of Séelevelt's book in which the Nemsède pronounced an anathema upon all those who made a profession of killing on the orders of a commander. The proselytism was soon so effective that the soldiers, having become the objects of public horror, saw themselves abandoned by their wives and families and spurned by all as accursed. The general scorn opened the eyes of those wretches, who, to the last man, deserted their bloody flags. Thus, the despot was overthrown and liberty reestablished by the dissolution of the forces that had served to nullify it.

Of all the Starian peoples, the Tasbarites are those whose mores best capture the philosophical spirit of Marulcar's teachings, and they know how to most truly give form to them. The Tasbarites, eager for pleasures and, above all, for the pleasures of the intellect, devoted themselves to literature and the arts. The depositories of all knowledge, Séelevelt, Mundaltor, and Cosmaël, charged with the supreme direction of religion, taught publicly in Tasbar's temple-schools. The taste for works of the mind became so general that the Tasbarites soon perpetually held the entire world's attention by sending forth every day new

[12]A nation in the north of the eastern continent.

masterpieces as food for human thought. The neighboring peoples, ceaselessly attracted to Tasbar and anxious to participate in so much glory, asked to form a body with the Tasbarites and united with them by accession.

This example was the signal for a revolution which took place in other countries of the globe. The divided nations grouped themselves around the most enlightened peoples, and the Starian world was soon reduced to a few states, which associated to draw closer the bonds of confederation and to define for all the protective authority of the Axiarchy.

But what made the Tasbarites so well-liked among the Starians was that they demonstrated to the world how intellectual pleasures could improve and ennoble the human race. They had made felt how true was the new faith announced by the Nemsèdes and developed by their compatriot Marulcar. They gave proof to Star's peoples, who were already following their example, at a distance, that the more the intellect is developed, the more the circle of human pleasures is enlarged and the more pleasures become pure, varied, gracious, and infinite.

Thus, with what enthusiastic fanaticism did everyone believe and accept these few words, which comprise the whole catechism of their moral faith:

Q. What ought to be the religion of mankind in this world?

A. Intellectual perfection and the search for pure happiness.

Q. And what are the means of attaining them?

A. One attains them through study and art.

In the final analysis, it is evident that Starian history is scarcely more than the glorification of the arts, literature, and the sciences, and that their heroes had to be poets, artists, and inventors.

I will not speak of the scientific and industrial discoveries which have resounded even in our small lunar world: for example, the invention of those vehicles which proceed by themselves, that is to say, by the elastic force of a spring; or even of the perfection brought to the construction of abares, the speed of which can be increased almost infinitely without danger to the navigator. However, I cannot in silence pass over the discovery of a multitude of little bodies gravitating in the outer limits of Star's planetary attraction between the orbits of Élier and

the red sun. Those asteroids, discovered a certain number of years ago by ethereal navigators, are not generally more than a few leagues in circumference and, because of their smallness, had previously escaped astronomical observation.

If that discovery attested to the boldness of Starian navigators in the last quarter-century, it still did not require the supreme audacity which the projects of our present-day navigators reveal. You recall that a few years ago explorers had already attempted to rise to the limits of the vortex closest to our great sun; but that, having reached the confines of the system of the star Téléphir, they had fallen back, feeling they no longer had the power to go farther. Well, what those vainly attempted is going to be accomplished, they say, by a crew of navigators in two abares of the largest dimensions. Other travelers, who followed them at an extreme distance and who afterward returned, affirm that they did succeed in overcoming the obstacle and that, luckier than their predecessors, they penetrated Téléphir's vortex. But for a long time the scientists and their friends, full of curiosity and anxiety, have been waiting at Tasbar in vain for their return; nevertheless, some still hope that death will not have been the result of their courageous attempt.

I am now going to speak of the present state of Tasbarite civilization, the secrets of which diligent study and a stay of several months in Tasbar are beginning to teach me. I had come down to Tasbar to the establishment of a proprietor, like me, of the Tassulian species, who maintains commercial relations with our native earth by means of ethereal navigation. The place is located, as I said, on a quay where immense vessels surrounded by talersis display the standards of their nationalities. Each day, I would see playing in the distance the pennants surmounting a forest of masts. The flag of the Tasbarites, of the people who have peacefully accomplished the moral conquest of the entire world, here adorns the largest and most magnificent ships. That civilizing standard is composed of seven colors which combine their hues as in the solar spectrum. These are, to be more exact, the colors of the rainbow shaded and arranged in the same order. The staff of the flag bears the white sun's image and the particular arms are indicated on a blue field where the sky's principal stars are sketched.

When you raise your eyes to that magnificent sky, you understand that mankind must draw from it more than a symbol. Originally, in the Starians' written and scientific language, the stars had signs designating them. They were characters of abbreviation which were added to those composing the alphabet. Little by little, the numerical signs, which were nothing over than the first letters of the alphabet, gave place to the astronomical signs: in that numerical system the four suns and four moons—beginning with Ruliel, which is unity, up to Tassul, which gave its sign to the number eight—were joined by a star, which represents nine, and the earth, Star itself, which became zero.

Knowledge of the Starian numerals' origin gave me the explanation of something which had struck me the first time I found myself in Tasbar: all the houses of the immense city bear, with the numbers which classify them, the images of the stars represented by the numerals. Thus, the houses are said to be under the beneficent influence of those bodies; and it is a holiday in the home each time one of its protecting stars is, astronomically, in its summer or its perihelion. The Starian months, each thirty-six days long, bear the names of the principal stars which shine in the night sky for the duration of each month.

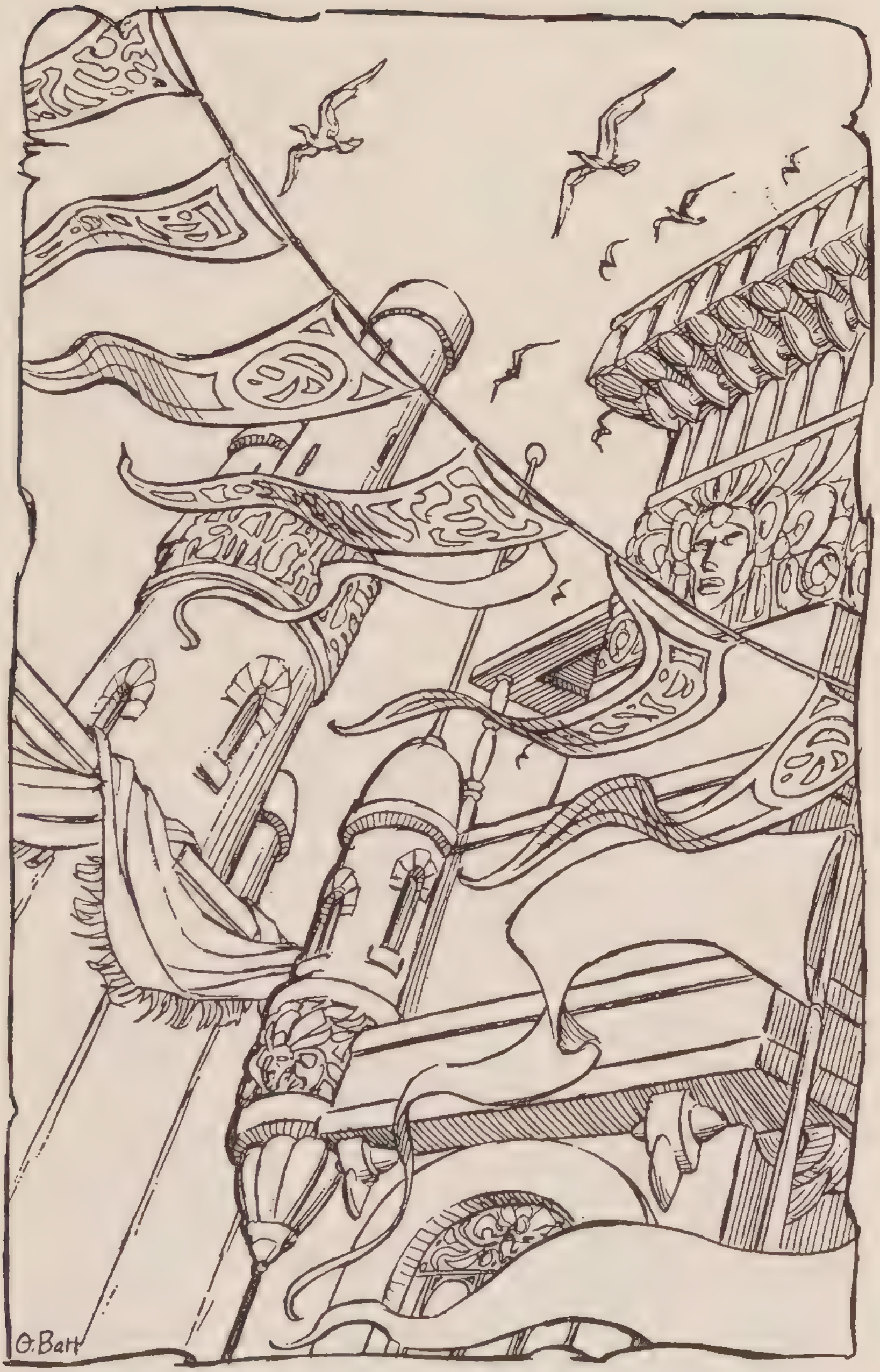
For me, used to the coolness and calm of Tassulian mores, the commercial activity reigning in Tasbar's streets seems almost to resemble madness. Upon my arrival, I set myself to work to sell some productions of my country I had brought to defray the expenses of my trip. In the exchange I thus had to make, I was at first surprised to discover that all Starian money is of the same metal and wrought on the same model. All the coins were little metal plates, differing in value according to the inscriptions engraved on them. The smaller coins are merely struck off with a stamp. The larger denominations include unmistakably the amount the state has assigned it or even bears the engraved signature of an officer of the treasury.

Nature has refused this earth, for its happiness perhaps, that certain metals be more rare than others. All are found in almost equal quantity. Star's mineralogical riches do not confine themselves to a general abundance of all metals on its surface; they also include an infinity of fine stones, which, without real value because of their commonness,

are nonetheless sought after by the Starians for use in works of art, the decoration of their houses, and, above all, as ornaments on certain parts of their costumes. Star's satellites have become, in this, the tributaries of the capital earth and furnish its jewelboxes with the brilliant variety of their precious stones. Among these, the Starians seek above all the incomparable diamond of Élier, with its beautiful crystallizations causing light to scintillate in a continuous stream of rings with a rainbow-colored flame radiating from the stone's center like the source of an uncanny fire.

All these gems, as I was saying, serve especially for the ornamentation of clothing. The Starians' present-day costume differs little from that with which Tassulians were familiar in the last period of that species' exile on the planets Tassul and Lessur. For the women, it consists of a white tunic long enough to cover the feet and, over this, a shorter gown of rich material. Only ribbons are entwined around their heads and are arranged with the tresses and curls of their coiffures. The belt and bracelets are always composed of a network of precious stones and fastened with a carbuncle or a diamond of Élier. When Starian women leave their homes, they wrap around their heads lace veils with the two ends left free and thrown backward floating over their shoulders; a scarf of a transparent material from Élier is draped around them, enveloping them in its shimmering folds.

The costume of the men equals that of the women in richness and grace. Their long boots, coming up to the knee, are generally of supple leather, violet-colored with golden tops or orange-colored with silver tops. The trunk hose, of a dull material, is almost entirely covered by an ample tunic belted at the waist. This tunic is ordinarily made of two superimposed fabrics. The first, of bright color and rich texture, is covered by a crystalline cloth of Élier or perhaps one of those gauzes with silver thread coming from the Mirélian manufacturers; only toward the bottom or hem of the tunic, at the belt, and at the edges of the sleeves does the colored material appear. A cravat of guipure, with graceful designs, lets its fringed knots fall over the upper chest. Finally their city attire is completed with a large topcoat with wide sleeves and long folds, made of velvet or brocade, and a hat of the same material, but adorned with plumes, curled, flowing manes,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and beds of pearls or clusters of small, brilliant diamonds.

The law of Marulcar, which places a limit upon the possession of real estate, here prevents too great an accumulation of the fruits of labor, and sends capital to the objects of art and luxury, since private property is unlimited. I do not think myself mistaken in saying that here is one of the secrets of the Starians' intellectual activity.

The territory occupied by the city of Tasbar includes, as I have said, a vast region. To the south is located the port where at every moment innumerable ships go up by the mouths of the three rivers into the more inland parts of the city. Gigantic canals connect the rivers' different arms across the immense developments of the city. In the center of Tasbar is the site of the abare landing-place providing regular service to the four satellites, but especially to Tassul and Lessur. More to the north, finally, toward the suburbs, lead wide roads paved with slabs of hard, polished metal, which bring travelers and commodities from all corners of the earth.

The Tasbarite people leave at the disposal of their artists the treasures which they need for the creation of works. One could scarcely calculate the sums which Tasbarite architecture has drawn from public coffers; but one must add that Tasbar is covered with immortal monuments and the most marvelous buildings. In general, Starian architecture is very diverse in method and style. Thus, I will speak here of only two orders of architecture which happily the Tasbarites have employed in the construction of the most celebrated buildings.

The essential component of the first of these two modes of architecture is a line broken several times, or a zigzag. One of Tasbar's principal theaters, the plan of which I have under my eyes at this very moment, is entirely of this broken style, always full of originality and fantasy. Of gigantic proportions, the theater rises in the middle of one of Tasbar's most extensive and best decorated public plazas. The groundwork upon which it rests forms an elongated oval circumscribed by a double row of columns rising in a regularly broken line and appearing to mount toward the cornices in winding. The walls are cut with star-shaped windows, which allow the lights glittering inside every evening to sparkle outward. Above the pediment and the roof, where the angles are everywhere harmoniously combined, rises the cupola formed by a cir-

cular colonnade in which the columns, bringing together their parallel voussoirs, seemed, from below, twisted cords hanging from the dome. The edifice is crowned by a long sheaf of lightning rods with all their shafts bent into zigzags, imitating the bolts of lightning in defying them.

There is another style of architecture which as yet has been used only once, but with the greatest success; this is the twisted style, the basic element of which is the helix or spiral line. Marulcar's tomb, having become at once the Starian's Pantheon and the palace of the Chamber of Axiarchs, is constructed entirely in this style—the most pleasing, most graceful, I shall say, almost the most voluptuous to the eye, that I have seen in Tasbar or elsewhere. All the earth's peoples wanted to contribute to that temple's construction, and they resolved to make it entirely of bronze. Its construction lasted three hundred years, and Mundaltor the Longevous, who had designed the plan for it, supervised its execution right to the end.

The columns of this metal monument appear as spirals rising alternatively from right to left and from left to right, and support a vast entablature on which rest three enormous towers. Each tower, set off by a helix which encloses it from base to summit, in turning round and round diminishes and is lost in the sky. The exterior spiral of each tower, that slope of ever-tightening coils, is itself bordered by a line of twisted columns. From the base to the summit of the building the bronze walls are cut with rose windows and volutes, which allow light to penetrate into all its parts. Finally, ornaments which undulate and interlace above the capitals, turning in the opposite direction from the columns that support them, lead the gaze agreeably among the harmonious stitches of a network of spiral, twisting, or flexuous lines.

Since I have entered the domain of the arts, let me say something about music and painting among the Tasbarites. The favorite instrument of Tasbarite ladies is a kind of keyboard harmonica. This instrument produces sound by means of hammers of a spongy wood which strike against lamellas of a dense, elastic, and agreeably resonant alloy. For their public festivals and solemn ceremonies, the Tasbarites have invented a gigantic instrument for which they built, in one of the city's central districts, an enormous tower surmounted by a platform. Upon this platform stand the immense batteries of a colossal instrument, half or-

gan, half carillon, the harmonies of which can be heard distinctly within a radius circumscribing half the city of Tasbar. The only time I was able to hear it, that instrument was touched by Mundaltor, who is regarded as the parent of the fine arts on the Starian world.

Tasbar's museums are by far the richest and most beautiful in the world. I assure you that painting is preeminently the cherished and reverenced art of the Starian peoples, without exception. Ask a Tasbarite, as of a native of Risdole, what he most admires in the world; he will answer, "A great painter."

How that art must be magnificent, but difficult, under skies which bestow on the earth a light so limpid, so penetrating, and, above all, so varied in tones and effects! What painters are these who create on canvas—with the poetry of truth, in the midst of a nature of fantastic richness, of vast landscapes where the fires of several suns play—when, in a narrow frame, they must unite and reconcile the effects, more or less clear, more or less warm, of those suns which often from different points in the sky throw their colored light upon objects, which reflect their fiery tints as if they were not illuminated except through the stained-glass windows of one of our Tassulian temples!

When I went to study the new masterpieces of the Tasbarite school, the crowd was pressing around a picture by a young painter, a student of Mundaltor the Nemsède. It was a Ruliel sunrise which, for my part, I found rendered with the most exquisite poetry. On that canvas, the fires of the three colored suns have not yet lost the strength which the brilliance of the white sun is going to steal from them. Large drops of dew are attached to the blades of grass or hang on the leaves of trees, and, according to the light they receive, they take on glistening color and make of nature a flower-bed sown with sapphires, emeralds, or rubies. To the east, a supreme brightness emerges from dawn clouds. Opposite and in the background, in a bay, the shimmering sea beats the sterns of ships around which talersis move their fins. Finally, not far from there, the disk of Altéther is reflected, tracing a wake of green fire in the waves.

The collection of works by Tasbarite painters in the museum where the most magnificent paintings of Mundaltor are found is considered by all the Starians as the most precious marvel of the entire world.

I assiduously attended Tasbar's theaters while familiarizing myself with Starian manners and customs. In making some study of the Starian theater, I came upon a pamphlet which treated the theater's development among the ancients, that is, before Farnozas. In those primitive times, said the author of the pamphlet, fables were very popular, but the fablers did not at all imagine giving them the form of little poems. It was their custom to arrange their fables as vaudevilles or little dramas in which they made animals, in the form of puppets, move and speak before the spectators; it even happened that, to augment the theatrical effect, people were disguised as animals and, with these sham animals, real animals were even trained. The fablers were, then, the first dramatists in the art's infancy. Little by little, the drama assumed other forms, but up to now tradition has preserved its edifying purpose; the drama among the Starians, at least in its superior theaters, has remained an apologue.

That composition on the origin of the Starian theater gave me the explanation of some theatrical customs of the Tasbarites. Thus, in certain secondary theaters, I saw repleus playing roles appropriate to their condition. Those individuals were trained as actors and knew how to play their roles as repleus in the same way the humans knew how to accomplish theirs. One must not forget that the repleus, as domestics, are most often involved in the events which occur in the private lives of families, and, the drama, which is preeminently a picture of manners and customs, could not dispense with them in its theatrical scheme.

Please permit me here to interpolate one of those intimate dramas, which I saw performed in a secondary theater in Tasbar. I have chosen it among all the others, not because of the merit I see in it, but because it gives a rather exact idea of the habits of domestic life among the Starians and the Tasbarites in particular. Moreover, it will do perfectly in place of what I would have had to say touching upon those customs and habits, at the same time that it will reveal some traits of the infra-human species, the repleus and the cétracites.

THE CELSINORE

Starian Drama in One Act

CHARACTERS[13]

BASSAIL, Naé's uncle and guardian; FIANOR, Naé's fiancé; NAÉ, Bassail's ward; GOUSTOF, a cétracite; MURFIF, a repleu; TOUROU, a repleu; A CITOS, or blue domestic bird.

The action takes place in Tasbar. When the curtain rises, the theater represents a kind of patio. To the left and right are the doors of several suites of rooms. The background, completely in daylight, is cut by two rows of spiral columns, and allows a garden of rich flowers to be seen. In the distance are the banks of the Lampédousiami, where there are scattered trees with orange-colored leaves. At different points there are several celsinore plants.

SCENE I

Bassail, Fianor.

BASSAIL.

Where are you coming from, Fianor? The white sun has run two thirds of its course. All our assembled friends have played the prelude of the concert where your wedding feast is being celebrated. They are only waiting for you, to take their parts in the feast which must refresh their voices and kindle their verve to sing of your good fortune and the charms of Naé, my ward and your beautiful fiancée.

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[13]See p. 146 for the costumes.

FIANOR.

The concert has begun without me, you say? Oh! so much the worse! for the improvised verses in honor of Naé will not be worthy of her: only my heart and love are capable of singing to her words to make her soul joyful.

BASSAIL.

Was it the search for new wedding presents which has made you so late?

FIANOR.

This morning, Naé spoke to me with admiration of a cameo she had seen in Lesmirée Street. After making myself the purchaser of that jewel, I wanted, in passing through the Square of the Axiarchs, to add to it some fabrics, figurines of Élierian opal, and a miniature landscape representing a Lessurian city.

BASSAIL.

And what did you do with those curiosities?

FIANOR.

A cétracite of rather vigorous appearance, almost in spite of me, followed and asked the favor of carrying, in return for a small reward, the objects he had seen me buy. I entrusted them to his care to have the occasion of giving alms to the poor devil. He should arrive at any moment.

BASSAIL.

Come on, come on! there is nothing today but happiness and love, for, I tell you, I've discovered over there, under those trees with orange leaves, the most beautiful celsinore which has opened its rose corolla and shown its pillows of red stamens on the banks of the Lampédousiami. The first rays of the great sun made it open its curtains of perfumed petals.

FIANOR.

Dear uncle, how happy I'm going to be this evening! Ah! here is my porter.

(*Goustof enters and puts down his load. After having given him a piece of money, Fianor goes out with Bassail.*)

SCENE II

GOUSTOF.

Finally, my stratagem has succeeded. Here I am, introduced into this house—around which I've prowled many times when the sky was only lit by pale moons watching for the chance to penetrate it or seeking to discover whether the beauty of my life's mad dreams would ever show at the windows the face I'd want to take in my hands and devour with kisses. It's the fiancé himself, who, taking the cétracite Goustof for a begging *lazzarone* of the streets, brings me into this place where, if I can see Naé, I'm going to sate my eyes on human beauty and desires! Ah! if ever some bold stroke could have delivered into my possession that woman, object of these fiery desires! for only guile or force could make me master of her. Naé, a woman and divinely beautiful, has, like all the noble-natured women of Tasbar, a profound disdain for the son of a female repleu and a degraded man, for a being without a name, almost an animal, that no one has ever loved. . . . Really, I'm deceiving myself; Goustof the cétracite has been loved. But he blushes to admit it. It's by Tourou, the repleu. Yes, that female dared to love me—me, with human blood in my veins. . . . After all, eh! why not? since I, I dare to love a beautiful woman like Naé. . . . It's apparently a law in the chain of living beings to aspire to one more noble than oneself. . . . Of course . . . there she is! it's Tourou the repleu!

SCENE III

Goustof, Tourou.[14]

TOUROU, *throwing herself into Goustof's arms.* Goustof, good friend!

[14]The repleu's voice is small and sourish. Only the torso of the repleu is covered by a tunic.

GOUSTOF, *repulsing her.*

Come on, come on! the female repleu leaps at me like a dog that's found its master. (*To Tourou.*) Eh! What are you doing here?

TOUROU.

My brother Murfif and me, we're the servants in the house.

GOUSTOF, *aside.*

I want to cajole the little repleu, since maybe I'm going to need to give her a share in my schemes. (*To Tourou.*) How you seem to have grown better looking since I saw you last! How soft and shining the silken hair of your fur, and how carefully your long ears are combed!

TOUROU.

Today is my mistress's wedding.

GOUSTOF.

And Tourou loves Naé, her mistress?

TOUROU.

Oh, yes: Naé is kind.

GOUSTOF.

And I, Tourou, do you love me as much as Naé?

TOUROU.

Oh, I'd burn Naé to be able to lick you up!

GOUSTOF.

Well, if you want me to embrace you this evening, you'll obey me all day long.

TOUROU.

Right; you'll hug me, because I'll obey.

SCENE IV

The same, Murfif.

Murfif enters carrying a citos on his hand. He is dressed in a tunic shorter than his sister's. His ears are shorter and his hair is rougher and more close-cropped.

MURFIF, *putting the bird on his shoulder and his cap over his ear.*

Eh! good day, dear cétracite. . . . Ah! I see you've come courting my sister, Tourou. You haven't chosen badly, friend Goustof: Tourou is more wanton and passionate than her brother Murfif.

TOUROU, *to Goustof.*

Brother's right, go on—if you want Tourou for yourself!

GOUSTOF, *to Murfif.*

Ah! truly, noble repleu, you indeed also have the tastes and appetites of your species. (*Aside.*) Alas! often, myself, I feel only too well that I have some of that blood in my veins.

MURFIF.

Really! I'm known to be near the smartest repleu in this part of Tasbar; and when I can escape far from my master to go plundering in the suburb! . . . there's not a mean repleu dares argue with me over the female I've fallen in with.

GOUSTOF.

Surely not! you're all braggarts as well as cowards.

MURFIF, *insolently.*

When no human sees me, I'm not afraid of anything! Understand?

GOUSTOF.

Ah! that, repleu! It seems to me I'm here, myself, and I'm looking at you.

MURFIF, *drawing back into a corner.*

Pardon, mercy! great cétracite. Your voice has frightened my mistress's citos.

GOUSTOF, *approaching the bird to caress it.*

Then it's the bird sympathetic to Naé's thoughts. Happy citos! Every day you receive kisses from her lips.

(*At the moment he goes to touch the citos, it repulses him with its wing.*)

MURFIF.

Cétracite, good cétracite, don't cause grief to my gentle citos!

GOUSTOF.

Go on, go on! you can have your stupid bird.

MURFIF.

Naé's citos knows me; it's used to having me take care of it. True, it's often a finicky master; but I like to do its will. It, the citos, only loves Naé; it never sings except for her. Well, myself, in spite of that, I love the citos.

(*During this whole scene, Tourou directs alluring looks at Goustof.*)

SCENE V

Goustof, Naé.

Perceiving Naé, the citos flies to meet her; during this scene, the bird, perched near her, makes heard, in a melodious but weak voice, songs imitated by the music of the orchestra playing with muted strings.

NAÉ, *aside.*

The banquet's last libations make heard the clash of goblets being emptied. . . . My darling Fianor has emerged victorious from the concert. His ardent imagination and his musical, poetic soul have been flashes leaving behind his friends' flights of fancy, so well inspired on other occasions. It seemed to me that my enraptured looks were

warming my husband's verve. For me and because of me, Fianor showed himself more than a man, that is, a great artist. How much happiness is, then, reserved for me, who for the pleasures of my life am going to be able to draw from the treasures of poetry, spirit, and knowledge Fianor has amassed within himself to touch in his darling's soul the sensible chord of the spirit's voluptuousness! What a complete soul is his! (*Catching sight of the wedding gifts.*) And, look here, what a heart, and what charming taste! How many galleries and bazaars must he have gone through to find in Tasbar the objects of his choice!

GOUSTOF, *interrupting.*

This, divine lady, comes from an exposition on Lesmirée Street.

NAÉ, *turning around.*

Who, then, is here? Coming in, I thought I saw Murfif.

GOUSTOF.

I'm the porter Fianor charged with bringing home these objects which please you so much. If your eyes, formerly, could have inadvertently lowered on an old servant, perhaps Naé, the beautiful woman, today would have recognized a cétracite who on her father's ship was the driver and groom of the talersis.

NAÉ.

It was you who, for my reverenced and unfortunate father, was charged with guiding the ship's cetaceans?

GOUSTOF.

Yes. Oh, I remember it. I remember above all a voyage you made with your father to the islands beyond the gulf of Tasbar which they call the Cilléades. I almost let the ship err in looking at you. As today, you were there near me on the deck; and I sated myself with looking at you. But you, goddess of the sea, who let your veils float in the wind—you did not see me.

NAÉ.

My poor boy, I certainly couldn't prevent you from seeing me. But, myself, how could I have dreamed of looking at you?

GOUSTOF.

Alas! It would have been proper to prevent me from contemplating you: thus you would have spared me the sacrilege toward a woman. For, after having gazed at you so much, I . . . I loved you!

NAÉ, *simply.*

But talersis groom, in order to rid yourself of that passion against nature, you no doubt recalled that your mother was a repleu?

GOUSTOF.

I told myself I was like an insect in love with the blue sun. But, what's to be done, when this nature of mud has desires that burn it with all the fires of the white sun?

NAÉ, *gently.*

Every woman, as you know, treats with compassion and kindness the species of repleus and of half-breeds, but does not allow anyone to draw her thoughts to things which rouse her disgust. (*She exits.*)

(*During this entire scene, the citos has sung into its mistress's ears music in harmony with the thoughts she expressed.*)

SCENE VI

Goustof, then Tourou.

GOUSTOF, *alone.*

(*For several moments he remains to reflect, crouching.*)

Yesterday, I discovered on the seashore a nest of venomous scorpions; their sting is sufficient to kill even a talersis. I was going to clear the beach of those formidable animals; but I found in my heart at that moment so many poisons and so much hate that I reflected that, if they trod underfoot all venomous beasts, Goustof would be crushed before the scorpion. Therefore, I let the father and mother raise their family of scorpions; and so as not to be generous by half, I made them a present of the share of fresh

meat that fell to me for my dinner. (*To Tourou, who enters.*) Say, my little repleu, your mistress will be very happy this evening in her husband's arms, while both of them are enveloped in the corolla of the celsinore. Well, if you like, this same evening, open the door that gives onto the river for me, when the great sun has set, and I'll make you happy like Naé.

TOUROU.

Oh! yes; come, come! Tourou in your arms will be happier than Naé. (*They go out.*)

SCENE VII

Fianor, Naé.

(*They come out of the banquet hall; the citos that accompanies them sings during this whole scene.*)

FIANOR.

Our guests, so gay at the banquet and so enthusiastic at the concert, have now left us alone. To the two of us the life of love, to me your heart, treasure of sentiment!

NAÉ.

To me your thoughts, treasure of poetry, from which I shall long draw the sweetest enchantments!

FIANOR.

You will always have all, my thoughts and my heart.

NAÉ.

Darling, here we are united, both of us young and full of love. Say: as life appears to us as long and limpid, like the river bathing these gardens, wouldn't you say that it ought to flow on without end?

FIANOR.

That's strange! Your thoughts are full of tranquillity and hope, and yet your bird's song no longer sympathetically matches the expression of your sentiments, for it's taken a lugubrious tone.

NAÉ, *listening attentively to the citos.*
You're right; and I fear some calamity.

FIANOR.
Come on, I was wrong to frighten you. Your citos is jealous of the share of affection I'm coming to take from it. Naé, look at the sky! The white sun is about to disappear from the horizon; and already the earth, illuminated by the colored rays of another sun, assumes greenish reflections. Go, sweet friend, lay aside these festival clothes. The air is mild, and the nuptial celsinore discloses, over there, its down of stamens. I'll wait for you not far from it on the damp banks of the Lampédousiami.

(*Naé holds out her hand to him and exits. Fianor also goes out, in another direction.*)

SCENE VIII

A few moments ago, Ruliel set. The daylight, from the white it was, has become greenish, and the light illuminating objects is a bit less intense.

GOUSTOF.
Thanks to Tourou the repleu, who's let me into these gardens, my scheme has been put into execution. The two beach scorpions, nourished since yesterday by the flesh I threw them as food, had not left the place. Despite the danger, I was able to seize them and bring them here; and now they're sleeping amid the cushions of red stamens in the celsinore which is to receive Naé and Fianor. Go, brilliant butterflies, disport yourselves in the flower's calyx! I will be there myself, hidden in the large leaves that creep around the celsinore's flower. I'll overhear you two embracing; I'll take pleasure in predicting your hugs, and my heart will bound with joy when, amid the sighing of sensual pleasures, I'll hear the cries of anguish and death which will be wrung from you by the stings of my scorpions. They're coming! I'm going to dig myself into the foliage of the celsinores.

SCENE IX

Bassail, Naé.

BASSAIL.

You're trembling, child!

NAÉ.

Well . . . yes, a feeling of disquiet is oppressing my heart. My poor citos is sad and alarmed; and you know, you, my dear uncle, how its instincts are identified with the intimate thoughts of my heart. This is the first time I've seen it frightened when my soul was filled with joy.

BASSAIL.

Your gentle bird is jealous or unwell. Go without anxiety to the celsinore where your husband is to join you; go, my dear ward; your second father blesses your love.

(*At this moment, the citos rushes over to perch on Naé's shoulder and makes heard cries of alarm and dismay.*)

NAÉ.

Alas! what do the cries of the poor bird mean? (*Naé caresses the citos and tries to calm it.*) Sweet friend, is it your good-night kiss that you've come seeking? Oh, Naé gives it to you heartily. (*She kisses it. Immediately, the bird, as if it had waited only for that caress, flies toward the garden while sending forth several notes of desperation.*)

BASSAIL.

My child, set your mind at rest. And, a second time, go in peace! (*He embraces her.*)

NAÉ.

Well, until tomorrow, then. (*She exits. The green daylight begins to diminish.*)

SCENE X

BASSAIL.

All is pure and calm in the sky. The stars shine silent. The breeze that rises from the river carries up to me here the fragrance of the celsinores. This sweet-smelling air impresses me with my youth's most beautiful memories and carries me back to the days of my greatest happiness. As at this hour, the skies beamed with hope. It was there (*pointing a finger*) that I tasted the first charm of possession—in that same place where Fianor, at this moment perhaps, presses Naé to his heart! The nuptial flower was fresh and rosy, and its rich petals and splendid stamens gave out their perfume as the savor of our love. . . . But I seem to hear cries along the river! What could it be? Oh! I tremble in my turn for those children, and I imagine some dreadful misfortune! . . .

SCENE XI

Bassail, Murfif, Tourou.

MURFIF, *running up.*

Master! great Master! I just saw Goustof the cétracite fleeing our gardens and jumping into the river, that he crossed swimming.

TOUROU, *on her knees.*

Ah! pardon! that vile cétracite—I loved him; I had him come for me. But I'll hate him now. I hate him!

BASSAIL.

Go, you wretches! run! look for Naé and Fianor! Oh! heaven, heaven! What's become of them? I won't survive them! . . .

SCENE XII

The same, Fianor, Naé.

FIANOR, *appearing with Naé.*

No, my uncle, it's not for us you should weep. (*Showing the citos, lifeless, that Naé is bathing with tears.*) Here is the poor victim. . . . Naé's citos sacrificed its life to save its mistress. Drawn by plaintive cries, I approached the celsinore designated to be the cradle of our love. I opened its corolla, and I saw inside the flower the courageous bird dying in convulsions near two enormous scorpions killed with its beak.

NAÉ, *kissing the citos.*

Gentle bird that lived on my thoughts and died for me, your memory will live in me as much as my own thoughts.

MURFIF, *crying.*

Murfif has lost his only friend! Murfif will die soon, too!

FIANOR.

No, my good repleu. Fianor has from infancy possessed a citos that will become the bird sympathetic to Naé and Murfif's friend. (*To Naé.*) Dry your tears, my noble wife, and may the night end for us according to Tasbarite custom. Just now, I found, in the east of the gardens, a new celsinore which this very evening came to open its virginal calyx to the pure rays of the emerald sun.

THE END OF THE CELSINORE.

This life passed amid arts and spectacles enchants me. The Tasbarite customs, the air you breathe in Tasbar truly invites savoring the divine pleasures the city offers you on all sides. And then, must it be said? it pleases above all because opinions are without censor, because here thought

is conscious of being free. The Tassulians I have met here have lost the habitual coolness given them by the exclusive love of oneself and of one's blood natural to our hermaphroditic constitution; and almost all of them have abandoned themselves to the enchantment of practicing the fine arts.

Of all the travelers of extra-Starian species, the Tassulians are beyond a doubt the most numerous in Tasbar. I would even say that there you would meet very few Lessurians, almost no Élierians, and no Rudarians at all. My host, the Tassulian, who knew these different species through having previously traveled to their planets, explained to me why those peoples have never sent colonies to the earth and have not at all mingled with the Starian race after it reconquered the world which had been its cradle. Could the translucent Élierian become acclimated far from his diaphanous globe? That seemed doubtful to him; and those who have come to Tasbar have been eager to return to their country. The Rudarians, perpetually struggling with an unfruitful nature and a devouring scourge, had wished to abandon their dark homeland; but those who had landed on Tassul or Star and had breathed the air died soon afterward. It is maintained that the bizarre constitution of that species requires the fogs of their dense air for survival. With their magnificent planet, the Lessurians find no reason to be envious of the Starians' homeland. As for the Tassulians, who nevertheless come to visit Star in great numbers, their hermaphroditic constitution and their retiring character seem better adapted to the monotony of their sky and the perpetual mourning of their earth.

It indeed must be said, that, despite the intellectual pleasures with which I was saturating myself, I felt within me a sort of budding homesickness, that my host had rightly predicted. Moreover, the time fixed for my return to Tassul was not to be long awaited; and I wanted to put to good use the days which I still had, though being urged on by my desires to the moment when I would be able to see Avia again and to embrace the good Teusneuth, my *parens*. I did not want to leave the Starian globe without having accomplished the pilgrimage every foreigner thinks obliged to make to the Land of Rêvour.

Rêvour is a still unexplored island located to the southeast of the eastern continent. At first, it seemed

strange that the Starians, who have climbed over all the globes of space, would still have been unable, from the gateways of their cities, to penetrate into an island of their own world. What I am going to say further on will give an explanation of this fact. This land of Rêvour, the only one which is hidden from the scrutiny of Starian voyagers, has by this very fact excited suppositions and exercised the imaginations of the entire world. Each story-teller, each novelist or poet has seized upon fabulous accounts concerning the mysteriousness of that island, and today all the marvelous and magical in Starian literature rests upon fables on the subject of Rêvour. I left in an abare with several Tasbarites of distinction, and, despite a considerable wind that retarded our vessel's progress (as you know, the speed of abares diminishes sensibly when moving within an atmosphere), two or three hours sufficed to bring us over Rêvour.

Nearly halfway, we had touched the summit of the peak of Rerriton. That colossal volcano, famous in Starian history, has not thrown forth any flames for many years. It is inhabited, on its lower slopes, by some philosophical hermits who have hollowed out their dwellings in its hard, metal sides.

Upon arriving above the island of Rêvour, you are struck immediately by the strangeness of that strip of land. A zone of high rocks like enormous crystallizations, with projecting pyramids all of sharp angles, is the first belt surrounding the island on all sides. This belt, in the form of a circular band, is inscribed by another band a little larger formed by a bottomless lake or gulf, where the sea water rushes foward eddying as in an immense torrent. The sea comes into the bed of this stream through several openings hollowed out of the first belt's rocks, and after having circled rapidly the island's central part, it goes out again through other subterranean outlets. The center of the island is the truly unknown part of it. An opaque and phosphorescent atmosphere covers all that part of Rêvour and does not permit passing travelers to fathom the mysteries it conceals. Although the makers of ballads and stories affirm the contrary, all those who have attempted to find their way in there by sea or by air have never returned. Be that as it may, that little corner of the earth has made itself more spoken of than all the continents and islands of the various globes

of the Starian system. Rêvour is the land of imaginary wonders. Perhaps it conceals nothing but a dreary desert, yet the imagination has peopled it with all sorts of monsters.

Since the agreed-upon time of my departure arrived immediately after my return to Tasbar, I said farewell once more to all the magnificence, to all the joys of the incomparable city, and, on the appointed day, the ethereal packet came once more to lift me from the earth, but this time to go back to Tassul.

Only a few hours now remain of the crossing; nevertheless, to while away the time, I bought the poet Isrich's new work before my departure. After having read it, I decided to give it to my compatriots after the account of my transethereal voyage, persuaded that they would be grateful to me for sending them this novelty.

Avia, the thirty-third of the month of Ertaër, of the year 1863 of the era of Marulcar.

ÉLIA

An Historical Poem in Prose

BY ISRICH OF TASBAR

CANTO I

What did this moved multitude wish? What did they await in this place? The approaches to the principal opera house of Tasbar were obstructed by animated groups. Some pressed under the colonnade, circulating between the two angular rows of columns broken twenty times. Others were leaning with their backs to the walls capriciously adorned with the zigzag's rhythms, which there traced star-shaped apertures or fantastic arabesques. The house doors, festooned with angular lines and day stars like the

figures of an embroidery, were besieged by the waves of the multitude. Each was aśking the others the most recent news from the interior; for that, at the moment, full of masses of spectators, had left outside ten times more of the curious than it could contain; and in that hour of disappointed curiosity, the crowd standing in the plaza of the opera house full of envy and regret, had remained to follow the vicissitudes of the performance at a distance.

If outside the waiting was avidly curious, within the spectators counted with murmuring impatience the minutes separating them from the curtain's rising. All had the presentiment that a great work was about to be unfolded behind that cloth. They had come to attend the performance of an opera. The author's name had remained a mystery, but the leading role was to be played by a woman famous and respected for her intellect, decency, and immense talent in all branches of the liberal arts. On all the tiers of the vast hall, they were telling each other the history of the birth, life, and works of Élia, who, still in earliest youth, had already astonished Tasbarite society by her talents crowned with a fairylike beauty. Some cited her paintings collected by the museums; others recalled her first appearances as a composer on the subordinate opera stages; but everyone applauded beforehand her immense talent as a singer, which she had revealed on the great stage where she supported the magnificent repertory.

Élia, it was further said, was born on Lessur of Starian parents. Her maternal grandmother was a woman of Élier who, having married a Starian, had left her diaphanous earth and had come to live in Tasbar with her husband. Élia's mother died during the voyage to Lessur, shortly after giving birth to her. Before dying, the mother confided her child to a Lessurian friend, who nursed the infant and fulfilled the other functions of a mother. She was one of the most distinguished women of Lessur. She gave Élia the education of her country's women: that is to say, making her a great poet and an inspired musician. Élia shone in the assemblies where, it is well known, poetic and musical improvisation is to give rhythm to the thoughts of all Lessurians. On Lessur, it is said, she was even sought after as a companion because of the charms of her dancing, that favorite diversion of Lessurian women. Her father by adoption, a distinguished painter, elated at Élia's successes, wanted in her to perfect the artist in

himself by giving her art lessons. Beyond her aptitude for the arts, Élia had further taken from that happy country the grace and aesthetic bearing of the women of Lessur. Thus, when she came to Tasbar upon reaching marriageable age, to receive her parents' modest inheritance, she was taken for a sylph from celestial spaces.

At the time we find her in the theater, she had lived in Tasbar for three years. Her great beauty, her strange, almost ethereal physiognomy, the elegance of her manners—which one would have called entirely spiritualized—had from the first excited intense admiration. But her masterful ability of making the passions she conveyed on stage vibrate in the soul had made the classical land ring with the enthusiastic echoes of her artistic glory.

It was accompanied by these memories and by her just renown that Élia, the young and pure Élia, appeared to several thousand spectators. At the sight of so much beauty, youth, and soul, all those spectators, their hearts gone out to her, unanimously greeted her with a smile; each sent out his soul to her so that she could impart the transports which were seen already swelling in her breast.

The performance began with a profound meditation. The opera's subject was taken from the story of Starilla, the beautiful goddess of the Tréliors; and Élia was charged with representing the civilizing beauty of that ancient myth. Now is the moment to sketch the outward appearance of this woman who concentrated upon her the eyes of several thousand persons. Seeing Élia, one would guess her of mixed blood from Star and Élier. She had the transparent white coloring of Élierian women shaded with pink by Starian blood. Her light brown hair with golden highlights floated in a thousand curls gathered around her face of opal tinted with pink. Her eyes were of a deep blue; and her features, of an immaterial purity, clearly showed, in soft and flowing lines, its contours full of celestial grace. Upon hearing Élia speak or sing, one would listen with ravishment to her virgin's tone; and upon seeing her, one could not tire of gazing at her, for from her words or gestures streamed the poetic sentiment and elegant ease of the women of Lessur.

Élia summed up within herself art in beauty. Ah! she was indeed the Starilla of the new world—a living Starilla,

thrilling the multitudes, this time not only by the exquisite grace of her form and manners, but also by the cries of her artist's soul, received by thousands of hearts beating with hers. The first act ended amid transports throughout the house, transports the furious acclamations of which, heard outside, gave birth to more and more numerous murmurs of regret.

At that moment of rest, when the performers' songs and the instruments' harmonies were silent there, while the still thrilling spectators communicated their impressions to each other, it became gradually apparent that the attention of the whole house was directed toward one box in the front of which stood a young man of great distinction. Immediately, the name of Abassur flew from mouth to mouth; and three shouts of admiration greeted the young man, the object of general attention; but he, whose presence had been able to distract the public's thoughts from the profound emotions which had stirred them, retired modestly to the back of the box occupied by his friends.

The small number of foreign spectators, questioning their neighbors to learn how this young man merited the crowd's acclamations, were informed that Abassur, whose name had already been remarkable in the sciences, had just become illustrious forever by bringing about a decisive perfecting of the navigation of abares. The speed of the machines, through Abassur's method, could be increased tenfold without detriment to the safety of ethereal travelers. That discovery, which had moved the Tasbarite nation at the same time that the first appearances of Élia on the principal opera stage of Tasbar, at that moment, diverted the enthusiasm of the Starians, so lavish toward all kinds of glory.

When the curtain rose for the second act, the scenery's beauty drew the spontaneous applause of all those present. For the first time, Élia appeared in a ballet. Élia, who had already put all the charms of her marvelous individuality at the service of the character of Starilla, here still knew how, through the progress of her dance, to spread out in all its aspects the pure ideal of human grace and beauty. Before those configurations, in which matter seemed no more than the sensible and penetrable vestment of the spirit and which held divine harmony in

equilibrium, the entire house became transformed and had to adore it.

Oh! she was indeed a true goddess of beauty! It was questioned whether Starilla, a true divinity, but forgotten by human beings, had now wished to show herself to the Tasbarite people in all her splendor in order to recover her altars. They no longer applauded: ravishment rendered them immobile! The songs were heard once more interrupted by the frantic roar of the spectators, soon followed by a silence which preserved only the murmur of breath. . . .

Finally, the opera ended. All hearts were fatigued with the emotions of pleasure and passion. After the curtain's fall and the dying away of the last notes of the orchestra, each remained immobile and silent in his place: the names of the composers were about to be revealed to the public. In fact, one of the theater directors, who had followed the performance in a stage box, rose slowly and declared that the entire production, the scenery, the ballet, the poetry, and the music were the work of Élia. When the artist reappeared on stage, the women waved to her with cries of joy. The men, without exception, bent one knee to the ground while sending her a triple volley of bravos!

CANTO II

Amid these moving multitudes, who were diffused through the streets of Tasbar and went getting entangled infinitely, only two men interest us, and when we perceive them, our eyes do not leave them. Where were these two young men going as they walked side by side through the vast circuitous roads of the Tasbarite city, along palaces where the marvels of industry were displayed—so occupied with their private conversation that they neither saw nor heard what was taking place along their way? One of them is already known to us by having been observed yesterday, at the first performance of *Starilla;* he is Abassur, the scientist, the intrepid traveler for whom space, the infinity of the skies, no longer existed. His friend's name is Glaïmir. He was one of the small number of Élia's distant relatives; and that title permitted him sometimes to approach her—she who was at the moment the admiration of the earth's capital. They were

walking; they proceeded always talking. Where, then, were they going?

It is customary, as is well known, in the literary and artistic world, that on the day after a success, the friends of the composers and interpreters of the new piece go to the foyer of the theater there to compliment those who have well merited notoriety. It was to this ceremony that Abassur came led by Glaïmir, desirous of presenting him to his relation.

They were going; they were proceeding through the intricacies of the streets; and Glaïmir, as he walked, could not refrain from relinquishing all his thoughts to the bosom of his friend. Glaïmir was recounting the impression his heart had always preserved of the first sudden appearance amid his family made by Élia, beautiful, poor, and touching, arriving from Lessur to request her father's inheritance from her relations.

"I was young," he said; "no woman had yet arrested my gaze. My eyes engraved in my soul the image of Élia; and since then, I've never looked at another woman."

"Élia is a great artist," replied Abassur, "for yesterday, in listening to her, for the first time in my life I was conscious of being moved by a peaceful emotion. Continue, Glaïmir, to love Élia, since she is the girl who has gladdened your heart with the first sentiment of tenderness. I'm little versed in the study of human passions, but I believe in the endurance, in the perpetuity, of first love, of the new and pure sentiment that a young, simple, and sensitive woman has caused to be born in you. Myself, amid the painful studies and arid labors of my whole life, I've always felt my inattentive mind carried back with happiness to her to whom my child's heart was given, and who, on her part, also has dedicated to me an almost prepubescent love, and all with naïve unreservedness. You've seen Nérillis at my father's. She was brought there and raised with my sisters when she lost her father, my mother's uncle. Unknown to her, grace is in her whole person; the frankness of her heart shines in her looks. Well, it is to her that I've owed the calm and serenity of my soul in the middle of my work. It was through her love, the amiable satisfaction given to the needs of my heart, perhaps that I was able to avert idleness, which would have delayed the difficult studies that I've known."

"Don't you well know, Abassur," interrupted Glaïmir,

"that I ardently envy the fame you've been able to conquer? I'm ashamed of not being able to offer Élia—my veneration contending with twenty of the most brilliant rivals—anything but a name belonging to a doubtlessly glorious family, but which I've not been able to rejuvenate with a new luster."

"What does that matter? If Élia loves you, she'll be happy to raise you to her level, as I'll be happy to give my name to Nérillis."

They had been walking for a long time jostling the crowd; but at that instant. Glaïmir stopped: they found themselves at the door of one of the museums which contained some of Élia's paintings. Glaïmir had Abassur go in. The latter, who until then had little examined Élia's different works, was struck by the vigor and poetic composition of the young artist's pictures. His ecstatic admiration would have kept him a long time devouring those suave paintings with his eyes, if Glaïmir, recalling that Élia perhaps would not find them the first to congratulate her, had not dragged his friend along with him. They left then and went running to the theater, despite the hindrance of traffic where there crossed a multitude of people, riders, repleus, and vehicles.

When they entered the hall where the festivity in Élia's honor was to be held, she had not yet appeared. Abassur, upon entering, found himself quickly surrounded by the elite of illustrious Starians who had made an appointment there. But the artist, the object of the ceremony, made her entrance, and the press that had surrounded Abassur made a circle around her.

The girl's face, prototype of the most exquisite beauty, then reflected elation and joy. Élia, at that moment, truly could have represented, in the eyes of those present, the myth, the divinity, of happiness. Whoever would have been able to detach his gaze from her in order to carry it back to the entourage of the most lovely Starians, a multitude of whom filled the hall, would have been tempted to believe that, with her slender, soft, and unblemished form and features and celestial grace, this woman was of a more than human essence.

Soon testimonies of respectful enthusiasm burst out on all sides. The young men, especially those who had already acquired some distinction and who were much envied, brought to Élia's feet homage in which one could

clearly catch a glimpse of a passion more intense than their admiration for the woman or for the artist. Around her pressed Teuzesful, Noraïl, Vallaës, and Daëllim, all names known and venerated by the Tasbarites.

Glaïmir, the most earnest of Élia's suitors, had, as her closest relative, the privilege of entertaining her in particular and of accompanying her when she went through the ranks of young women, whom she thanked effusively for having come to attend the festivity given in response to *Starilla*'s success.

Upon entering the fashionable circles, Élia had seen the crowd's welcome of the young and modest Abassur. She could not refrain from congratulating Glaïmir for being counted among the friends of that man of great genius. Glaïmir, encouraged by Élia's words, asked her permission to present Abassur to her, and immediately going to bring his friend, he led him to Élia and, for the moment, surrendered to him the honor of being her escort.

When the crowd that filled the drawing rooms saw Abassur take Élia's arm, they respectfully made way for the two young people. A murmur of satisfaction was heard, as if each of them had felt that Élia's high soul alone could be equal to the stature of Abassur's mighty intellect. The exigencies and etiquette of the festivity prevented the conversation of Abassur and Élia from being much prolonged; but they both received from it a profound, although different, impression.

Élia's heart, until then entirely possessed by a passion for the arts, felt shaken within itself by confused spasms of sadness and disquiet, precursors of the tender passions. As for Abassur, the dances and songs of the night before, the contemplation of Élia's paintings at the museum, and, further, just now, that conversation all scintillating with the poetic spirit of the young woman whose harmoniously sounded words still vibrated in his ear had opened his soul to joys which until then he had not suspected. Élia had made spring forth in him the fountain where his spirit plentifully and delightfully drank intense waves of pleasure and clear happiness.

The festivity ended with a recital in which Élia was heard. Her songs had ceased a moment ago, and the multitude was listening full of joy and effusion, when Abassur, immobile in his seat, again felt all his faculties enchained,

suspended by the melodies modulated by Élia's sweet voice.

Abassur returned to his father's home still moved and surprised by the new sensations which since the day before had caused to thrill in him a divine pleasure. It required nothing less than the naïve disquiet and the touching attentions of the amiable Nérillis to draw him out of the reverie into which those emotions had thrown him.

CANTO III

When Élia returned to her modest home, she began to muse, then cast her eyes around her, and this time felt the dark cold of nothingness. This time, she did not have a word or a caressing smile for her two faithful repleus, the intelligent Vanoumi and the energetic Flaousta. In the look of supreme investigation she cast into her heart, she saw that a passion was being born and that Abassur was its object; and, although she foresaw all that love could hold for her in future pain and anguish, she still did not seek to drive it from her. Although Abassur was perhaps the most sought after man in Tasbar, Élia, it must be said, vowed aloud that she was worthy of him.

Several days passed during which the young artist let herself slide indolently along in love's gilded dreams. At last, her nascent passion made her forget art; she no longer either painted or composed. Even Starilla, after three times arousing the Tasbarite public's frenetic enthusiasm, had ceased her songs. Alas! if she could have known that, while she was forgetting her cherished arts to let her spirit roam through an imaginary Eden full of Abassur's love, he was spending every moment near Nérillis, whose pure love sufficed his emotions and filled his heart.

Nevertheless, even at the feet of Nérillis, Abassur thought often of Élia. But that thought was nothing other than the memory of an intense enjoyment, of an entirely delightful state of the soul for which he thirsted intellectually. To Nérillis he read Élia's most beautiful poetry. He dragged her through all the museums to have her admire the supreme artist's paintings. More than anyone else, Abassur suffered from Élia's silence. He questioned Glaïmir about the motives of her seclusion. He would have wished, like Glaïmir, to be able to approach to ask her for

her dances, her songs, and the work of her brush—in a word, the pleasure, the sweet voluptuousness of the intellect, with which she had once elated him.

Tormented by unsatisfied desires, he was fond of traveling alone in the mountains or in the heart of forests along the Saguir's banks. There, he amused himself with watching the highly sensitive bramiles moving their limbs, or else making those animal-plants flee through the air employing their leaves as wings. At other times, with his back to the colossal wall of a syphus trunk, he would listen, through the din and rumbling of the wind in the branches of the immense vegetable which moved above his head, to the distant metallic sounds of the lartimor's dry fruit. It seemed to him that the cadenced and harmonious notes the wind brought to him recalled the moving melodies he had heard from Élia's lips.

Meanwhile, the whole literary and artistic world of Tasbar also murmured against the voluntary reclusion of Élia. Finally, she, vanquished by the multitude's importunity, consented to be heard at a concert given by a new Axiarch to celebrate his elevation to the Starians' supreme civil office. The announcement of Élia's reappearance in public made Abassur thrill with expectation. In his eager anxiety, he had used his name and influence to be seated in the first row, so that upon entering into the circle reserved to the performers, Élia, in her turn, could see the present object of all her thoughts.

Each time Élia showed herself and even before she let fall a single note, everyone, except Abassur perhaps, was under the influence of her angelic beauty. But when she had begun to make herself heard, Élia, who had perceived Abassur's indifference, remarked with visible satisfaction the applause which her melodies, exalted by a vigorous poetic sense, drew from the man of her choice. From that time, her inspiration took on new life; her spirit was ignited at the burning furnace of her heart. Abassur loved her songs and poetry; Élia, at that hour, therefore, conceived the project of captivating the scientist's mind, of winning it over, of subduing it to herself by voluptuously intoxicating it with the poetic emanations which increased her faculties and overflowed from her artist's soul. She told herself that Abassur would belong to her when she would be able to pour into him the wont of spiritual

pleasures her genius had the ability to bestow on the multitude.

Thus, from that moment, Élia directed toward Abassur the magnetic jet of her creative soul. Moreover, love gave her new abilities. Each day a piece of poetry, a picture, a statue came from her hands. In the theater, her creations, which multiplied, did not even allow the public, eager for those divine pleasures, time to long for their intellectual food. Of all those voluptuous spirits, Abassur showed himself the most eager and most passionate. She guessed him each day more and more affected by the enchantment with which she enclosed him. Indeed, Abassur's faculties, augmented and identified with Élia's, would receive from the woman artist's inspirations, shocks of incorporeal voluptuousness. At that sublime school, Abassur had ended by feeling as much as anyone; truly, he himself had become one of those spirits with the power to create and had given Élia homage in several pleasing productions; in a word, at a breath from Élia's soul, Abassur had become a great artist.

Oh! it was a time of rapture and enthusiastic delights in which the awed multitude ran to receive from those two inspired ones the sweetest emotions and to attend the tournament of inspiration in which Abassur sparkled beside Élia, while flashes of inspiration burst from the latter in a way that inflamed her lover's soul. They gave up their faculties and gathered the transports of the spirit. Abassur had become a poet, but Élia's poetry manifested itself in all art forms. Painting, music, and dance were other languages which she knew how to handle with success.

Glaïmir, carried away like the rest in that torrent of artistic pleasure, had retained, however, sufficient reflective power to discover that Abassur was the man Élia loved and the object of that flood of poetry. When his doubts were changed into certainty, his soul, expanding in the sweetness of the arts, contracted within him, and jealousy soon completely possessed him. Admitted into the intimacy of Abassur's family, he hurried to the women's apartment where Nérillis, abandoned for art and poetry, poured out her repining to the hearts of her cousins, Abassur's beloved sisters. Glaïmir had to do little to cast into Nérillis' soul the bitter suspicions of his heart. Thus, that very evening, at the moment when Abassur, coming from the theater, returned home more intoxicated than ever

with music, songs, and dances, his mother and sisters surrounded him to reproach him for deserting private and family life and pressed him to renounce those outside pleasures, while showing him Nérillis all in tears beseeching a look from her future husband.

In view of the sobs of Nérillis, pale and grown thin, Abassur's entire past came to mind. He recalled the intimacy of their naïve love, the vows he had made to his well-beloved. He regretted the transports of his faculties toward the delights of art. He searched the depths of his heart and believed he still found there the same love for Nérillis.

The entreaties of his mother and sisters kept him at home the next day. That day, Élia sang only for the public; and the public was colder than usual in noticing the disquiet that seemed to flaw the voice of the much-loved artist. The following day, there was the same absence of Abassur. That time, the women who performed with Élia were obliged to carry her from the stage. She had been faint before the end of the first act.

CANTO IV

Abassur's family had required him not to appear at the theater or museum until the day of his wedding, for which the preparations were advanced. He, vanquished by the obsessions of his sisters, the tender solicitude of his mother, and the desperate looks of Nérillis, sadly prepared himself for the betrothal ceremony.

It was on a summer morning that those preliminaries to a more intimate union were accomplished. The family meal having ended and the two young people engaged according to the rite of the Tasbarite people, Abassur left his father's house and went toward the port. There he jumped into a boat rented to him by one of those marine ostlers who make a living by renting talersis for cruises; and, himself taking the cetacean's reins, he goaded it in such a way that the talersis soon made the boat fly along over the waves with all the speed of its fins.

Three suns assembled in the zenith shot forth burning rays from the blazing sky onto the lukewarm waves. Abassur directed his course along the shore in the direction of the extreme maritime suburb to the west of the city,

and, avoiding the heat of the day, he went to seek shade and solitude in the midst of the tarrios forest, so well known to dreamers, melancholy souls, and misanthropes. He stopped a moment under the bough of one of those giant trees, the enormous trunk of which plunged down and took root in the sea's rocky bottom while lifting above the water a top with vigorous limbs feathered with large, green or garnet-red leaves.

Abassur was contemplatively gazing upon the undulations of the water driven back by the powerful breath exhaled from the talersis's nostrils, when, upon raising his head, it seemed that, in the distance, he saw passing and disappearing among the trees the celestial and spiritualized form of Élia. A repleu was guiding her talersis, which proceeded capriciously, describing circles between the dome of greenery and the moving waves.

Scarcely had the time of a lightning flash passed, when Abassur's talersis, pricked by the goad, bounded in the direction in which the apparition appeared. But before his craft had turned around in grazing several trunks supporting the canopy above the sea, Élia's image was lost behind the solid mass of a tree thrown down by waves. Abassur sailed for some time in the depths of the wood, searching on every side for Élia's shadow. In his mad eagerness, he struck the cetacean with redoubled blows.

Exasperated and furious, the animal soon disregarded the hand of its guide; and, coiling its harness around the limbs of a tarrios, it broke its traces, escaped at complete liberty into the sea, and left Abassur immobile in his boat attached to the branches of the marine tree. Abassur, mute with disappointed rage, disengaged his small craft from the bonds holding it fast and, taking his oars, sadly prepared to regain the shore.

At that moment, the skiff carrying Élia passed at some distance from him; and this time, Abassur could distinguish the features of the woman who had initiated him into the spirit's pleasures. Flaousta the repleu guided the talersis with a firm hand; and the prudent Vanoumi was reclining in the stern.

Élia, standing, her eyes fixed on the waves which in places mirrored rays filtered through the tarrios' foliage, seemed to be the sylph-queen of those somber and mysterious localities. The young woman's boat moved forward slowly. For the first time, Abassur was struck by the

divine charms which the whole city of Tasbar had admired so long, but which he, cut off from carnal emotions, had seen only as living manifestations of art.

In that magical place and in that hour, after the ceremony which had come to put his future under obligation, Abassur could not think of the artist: it was the woman who appeared to him in all the glory of her gentle, sad, and supreme beauty. For the first time, he noticed Élia's slender, aerial figure, that diaphanous and white flesh animated with an infinitely fresh pink, those features of the most angelic model, and especially the expression of that face, where goodness and tenderness disputed preeminence with nobility of spirit and intellectual power. It was not given Abassur to contemplate Élia more than an instant, for without her having lifted her head or being able to perceive him, her repleu had guided the gondola in another direction.

When the craft had completely disappeared from sight, Abassur, raising the veil over the state of his heart, perceived that, without suspecting it, he loved Élia. His soul tormented by regrets and disquiet, he beat his oars in the water and painfully regained the forest shore. A few moments later, he returned alone, his head bowed and face somber, through the western suburbs. At almost the same moment, Élia, upon returning home, found Glaïmir awaiting her return with a face beaming with visible contentment. Nevertheless, he came, he said, to complain to Élia of her severity and of the obstacles she was putting in the way of the accomplishment of his happiness and of the projects he had formed so long before. He envied, alas, the situation of his friends of whom several were touching upon the realization of sweetly dreamed hopes; and, as an example, he mentioned Abassur's betrothal, which he had attended that morning.

At that news, Élia paled, but remained strong. She wished Glaïmir an affectionate farewell and asked him to leave her alone; then, accompanied by Flaousta, she went to the abare which six years earlier had carried her from Lessur. Élia had steered it rather often and knew the mechanism thoroughly. With all dispatch, she had her clothing and the instruments necessary to the practice of the arts put into it; and, before Ruliel had reappeared on the horizon, Élia soared up into the sky, accompanied by her two servants, Vanoumi and Flaousta.

It was not until three days later that Abassur learned of Élia's flight. But he told himself that an etheric navigator of his skill could quickly overtake the fugitive; and, without informing any of his relatives or friends, he himself equipped his powerful abare, which the Tasbarite people had nicknamed the Eagle, and mounted into space with the speed of lightning.

CANTO V

Abassur knew Élia's relations with Lessur too well to believe the young woman could have directed her course to another globe: therefore, he went straight to that satellite. After a journey at galvanic speed, he landed on that earth, where the breezes, charged with nuanced aromas and changing perfumes, caress nature while intoxicating it.

Our voyager's search had made him think for a moment he was on Élia's track. Meanwhile, he in vain traveled through the diverse countries with landscapes of sweet enchantment. He visited the cities, each view of which, apprehended as a whole, is a picture of grace and harmony. Also in vain, his feet trod upon fields where the flowers are so abundant that the eye nowhere can distinguish the earth they cover.

Despairing in the futility of his search, Abassur resolved to go as far as Élier, where Élia still had some relatives in her maternal grandmother's family. Here, also, Élia had been seen; her opaque abare had for a moment touched that earth of crystal; her relatives had embraced her for half a day; then, she had departed again.

Abassur traveled thus several times from Lessur to Élier and from Élier to Lessur, never being able to overtake Élia. The dove sometimes would perch an instant on one of those islands in ethereal space and would take flight again. Then finally, it happened that, after various peregrinations, Abassur no longer heard any word of Élia. The sylphid, doubtless, had made herself an inhabitant of the ether; the angel now wandered in celestial abodes.

Abassur, deprived of half his soul, dead to the moral life, resolved to deliver himself from the material bonds which tied him to earthly things. Élia having been lost, he felt within himself only one need—to die. But it would have been beneath Abassur's great heart to dream of quit-

ting life without making his death serve science and humanity. At first, he had the idea of returning to Star and attempting, like so many others, to penetrate into the center of Rêvour, through the phosphorescent atmosphere which covered it and veiled mysterious valleys. But, one day when he was refreshing his fatigued lungs from the unnatural and seldom-renewed air of his abare by inhaling the fresh breath of Élier's zephyr, he seemed to recognize at one point in the sky, above Erragror, a luminous star which observation informed him was a comet, the frequent returns and changing forms of which had already tried the telescopes of astronomers on all the globes of the Starian system.

Abassur had some damage to his abare repaired and himself helped supply it completely. That operation finished, he made the courageous resolution of shooting forth into the sky in pursuit of the comet, with the goal of inspecting at close range the transformations of its substance and of observing the phenomena which were taking place in its flaming atmosphere, though he might perish embraced by the projection of its fires.

The Eagle, with a strong flight, adventuring into the still unexplored regions which border upon Urrias' orbit, for two days plunged into the crimson rays of that star. At last, he disengaged himself with joy from that blazing circle of attraction and rose above the path traversed by the red sun. The comet was only several thousand leagues from him! The Eagle, intensely electrified by Abassur, leaped over, devoured the sky, and, some days later, the comet offered itself like an immense earth encompassed on all sides.

It required all the competence and experience Abassur had acquired in the management of abares to follow with an equal speed the comet swept away into the heavens. Abassur approached it closely enough to distinguish, by means of a telescope, the physical phenomena taking place in the luminous atmosphere and on the surface of the solid mass. Ten times the curiosity of the scientist, pushed beyond the limits of prudence by the lack of care he had for his life, was at the point of drawing upon him some bolts of lightning or, at least, blinding that eagle who did not fear to look upon a sun from too close. His observations finished, Abassur stopped suddenly, his eyes still turned toward the comet, which he watched flee before him. He

saw it become smaller and smaller, until the distance showed him nothing but a luminous point.

Death had not wished he who had tempted it; and Abassur, feeling himself henceforth destined to live for the success and greater glory of his nation, sadly took again the course toward the satellites of Star. Already, the orbit of Urrias had been passed over at a point opposite to that which the Eagle had crossed it in its outward course toward the comet. The abare moved more slowly; and Abassur, his eyes wandering through bottomless space, successively brought back his thoughts to the five globes he knew so well—where he had many times visited the various countries, and where every beach had borne the imprint of his feet.

At that moment, an opaque and slightly luminous point appeared to him comprising, with the globes of the Starian system, a fifth satellite. That point was located below and close to him, as far as he could judge; little by little, it lost its phosphorescence in proportion as it approached and finally became, after several minutes of rapid motion, a small globe about three leagues in diameter. Upon approaching more closely, Abassur remarked that the asteroid possessed an atmosphere of great purity and that at the surface of that little earth the vegetation rose from the soil strong and varied.

The Eagle, descending from space, came to throw itself down and to breathe in that refreshing air, greeting with joy the chance encounter of that oasis in the deserts of the heavens. Having secured his abare, Abassur, with curiosity and circumspection, plunged into the groves of those divine regions; he refreshed his palate at the brisk sources of pure brooks and tasted all sorts of fruits and other foods which the earth appeared to produce in uncultivated abundance.

The night having come, Abassur observed, a short distance from the hospitable little globe which he had come upon in his course, another asteroid of the same appearance, which gravitated at that moment not far from him; and he could not doubt that the heavenly space between Élier and Urrias contained several of those celestial bodies and that their smallness had prevented them from being observed previously by astronomers. Abassur rambled two days over the surface of the asteroid. The morning of the third day, he set about climbing a small mountain the

slopes of which were strewn with clumps of trees in flower. The rays of Erragror, which was rising behind that hill, tinted its summit with an azure dawn.

At that instant, a start which shook his whole being made Abassur jump. . . . He had heard the divine sounds of a lute vibrating under a practiced hand. He still knew nothing of the origin of those harmonies; nevertheless, running madly, he rushed forward and soon stopped, panting with astonishment and unquiet joy in seeing Élia standing at the very height of that mountain of enchantments. . . .

But was it indeed Élia? Her head was encircled by the disk of Erragror as if by a celestial nimbus. The spiral curls of her hair, moved by the wind, shone intermingled with the star's rays. Élia made her lute resound with divine harmonies and seemed to command and preside as a goddess over the destiny of that enchanted planet, perhaps an Eden of the lower heavens.

Alas! it was only the soul or the image of Élia transfigured. Abassur, who in the first burst of joy had believed he had found his Élia, the artist of Tasbar, fell to his knees confused and overwhelmed. . . . She whom he had loved was of the nature of gods or of angels!

CANTO VI

The unexpected and fantastic apparition of Élia—radiating light, of aesthetic magnificence at the highest point on that enchanted world, which seemed to have been placed there only in order to serve her as a throne in the heavens—had left Abassur on his knees moved by the divinity of the being who had kindled within him all the passions of spirit and of flesh. He remained in contemplation before that divine image. Doubtless, he suffered in seeing her as of an essence incompatible with his human nature, but he consoled himself by feeling within him the power—what am I saying?—the irresistible need to love her. Henceforth, he only wished to love her as a man may cherish his idol or his god.

Still, the blue sun, without ceasing to pour torrents of light upon Élia, transfigured at the summit of the mountain, was already rising to a degree from the horizon. For Abassur, Élia's face was thus disengaged from the nimbus

the sun's disk had formed around her head. She ceased her harmonies and turned her divine eyes into space where Star showed its immense moon. From that instant, Abassur's illusion began to dissipate. What he now saw of Élia reminded him more of the woman. This was indeed the spiritualized form which made the Tasbarites question whether Élia belonged to humanity; but the uncanny was dissolved for him.

The impetuosity of these emotions were drawing him to the feet of his dearly beloved when he saw a short distance away and coming in his direction, Vanoumi, Élia's faithful repleu. Restraining the enthusiasm of his heart, he charged the clever Vanoumi with preparing Élia for his appearance.

And, a few moments later, Élia, choking with happiness, hastened to throw herself into his arms!

Here began for our two lovers a delectable life, in which the needs of the spirit and the heart, poetry and love, found a blessed and delightful satisfaction. The asteroid with its enchanting wooded regions seemed to be the heavenly paradise assigned them by the god of celestial rewards so that they might enjoy the happiness which had seized them. To Élia now belonged the great soul and powerful genius of Abassur. Abassur, in love with the artist, in love with the woman, intoxicated himself with Élia's poetic inspirations, all in covering with kisses those pure features which had become his possession. Such sensual pleasures are innumerable.

One day, however, Élia, whose eyes were following in space the revolution of the Starian earth, recalled to Abassur the memory of his mother and sisters, who were pouring out tears over his absence or perhaps even mourning his loss. Only that thought could cause the two lovers to resolve to tear themselves away from the delights of their oasis; and, some time later, the Eagle brought them back to Tasbar.

A certain anxiety had pursued them during the time which the abare, in its vigorous projection, employed in leaping the distance. Abassur primarily dreaded the look of Nérillis. But he had said that their happiness would have no shadow. Upon their arrival at Tasbar, they found Glaïmir at Nérillis' feet. Their mutual suffering had brought them together; and, that day, the two young peo-

ple, themselves engaged, were on the point of being married.

Abassur's return to Tasbar was not without glory for him. The report of his astronomical observations and daring discoveries spread throughout the world, and, although he was still young, the Chamber of Axiarchs extended the honor of calling him into its bosom. For a long time, he lived with Élia, his beautiful wife; they were both admired and cherished by the Tasbarites.

Nevertheless, they sometimes returned into space and went to isolate themselves from the world on the delightful asteroid which had become their property and which bore the name of Élia. For, alone, with poetry and love, in that Eden in the ether, they always recovered their former intoxication, which was like a foretaste of the pure happiness promised to the just in the superior stars of the heavens.

THE END OF ÉLIA AND OF BOOK V

EPILOGUE

THE WORLD OF DREAMS

O marvelous, strange spheres,
Lands where at liberty my thoughts in rapture
Have found extensive skies
To mold to their inclination conquered nature,
And by capricious spurts
Sowing a movement, a glimmer, or a creature—

You were the origin
Of my dreams. Star is one of those strange worlds,
Eldorado, Eden,
Which each of us adopts for himself and arranges,
Beautiful fields of the foreign
Which every mind invents and embellishes.

It is the better sphere;
It's riches to the poor, a fairy to children,
And to the Moslem dreamer
His paradise. It's better than expectation;
For one lives in spirit there,
There, in one's own world, in imagination.

In building cloudy castles,
In dreams I passed my earliest childhood leisure;
Days of indolent repose
Slipped away in dreams of the greatest pleasure,
In the most wonderful lives
Which childish pride embraced with gentle pressure.

Of old, was Star, then,
One of those castles of delicious candy?
No clarity, no precision

On that subject comes into my dim memory.
I wanted it all very fine;
And nothing has been adorned with so much fancy.

What does it matter! . . . My agile, adventurous spirits
Were bound to be pleased when they caught sight of this theme.
Nil novi sub sole: All since the Hebrew prophets
Have repeated these words. . . . Now, let's create a realm;
And let's invent suns with more delightful planets:
To find something new, let's give light to them.

Well, now, as in the time
Of my daydreaming infancy,
My thoughts inhabiting
An immense dream ceaselessly,
Star appears, assuming
Form and reality.

REGENERATIVE HOPES

Fantastic worlds, where every soul in grief
Escapes with passion, would you, then, be the gulf
Where the surplus, the excessive nourishment
Of our dreams are lost? What! Could this ravishment
Outside of us, despite our inspired souls,
In the ruby heavens, in the gilded spheres,
Be nothing but lunacy, imagination?
Myself, I'd much rather see the intuition
Among us of destinies which, in future eras,
Will send our soaring toward celestial shores
And will, at last, lead us in our migrations
From one globe to the next as so many stations
To the heaven foreseen by the inspired soul,
Where humanity, transfigured and beautiful,
Will find voluptuousness, perfection, joy.
This noxious, obscure globe, where misery
Marches beside us, in the vast, cold spheres
Secluded, doubtless—on the scale of worlds—
Is the most inferior, the lowest.
Of its sustaining essences, the purest
Are already consumed. Each people who pass
Over its poor soil leaves, with their trace,
More impoverished fields and more arid ground.
Its leavens are already almost exhausted
Across the older of its two hemispheres.
So, are the strong peoples going to search for lands
And settle farther away? Man can yet
Secure the nourishment for his powerful flight.
But when, thus, by mankind each exhausted fraction
Of the reproductive essences is drained,
Will Mother Earth rebel and refuse to nourish?
Oh! . . . Humanity is eternal, and cannot perish!
Their inventive genius, before that great disaster,

For a new homeland will have chosen their star;
On a better world of the superior regions
Mankind will have concluded their migrations.

And even though, still, our feeble might
Up until then, vainly, will search for the insight
To travel through the heavens . . . doubtless, there are
On nearby planets, some of those beings higher
Than us by their nature; surely there are on some worlds
Races of giants; and, finally, space abounds
In humans who, more perfect in body and mind,
Endowed with longevity, strong and bold,
Will, themselves, supply the question's answer.
We will see them come before the final hour
To give us the means of crossing the heavenly realms,
To find there the objects of our happy dreams,
And bring us, perhaps, to the vermilion spheres
To see Star more magnificent and richer in wonders.

FAREWELL TO THE READER

At this title, reader,
It seems to me I see you let slip a grimace!
Is it that our author
Wishes in concluding to give us his preface?
It would be here quite noble and good in its place.
It's at the book's ending, then, that it's recognized
And understood that an author is welcome indeed
To speak to us of himself. But I've no desire
To turn aside from the route I've followed here.
To the shafts of incensed critics
Enough other temerities
Will have exposed me. In a few words, however,
I can elucidate my thoughts on one point.
Dear reader, I don't expect
—Nor, perhaps, would desire—
To see all approve of Star and what it had
Of the new, the strange, the until-now uncreated.
I want you to comprehend,
Reproach and reprimands would not humble my pride.
Oh, under my task, indeed,
In my projects I have paused;
But I say that in this way it's good to stagger!
Under a great subject I bow almost crushed:
But what does that matter!
If I've done badly, I've attempted much.

May these stories drawn from another world have made you forget for a moment the miseries of this one.

DEFONTENAY.

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